

## **Exhibit 5**

# **PLAINTIFF HARFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANTS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT (HARFORD) (SD MSJ NO. 6)**

Case No.: 4:22-md-03047-YGR

MDL No. 3047

Member Case No.: 4:23-cv-03065-YGR

In Re: Social Media Adolescent Addiction/Personal Injury Products Liability Litigation

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 1

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

IN RE: SOCIAL MEDIA ADOLESCENT )  
ADDICTION/PERSONAL INJURY ) MDL No.  
PRODUCTS LIABILITY LITIGATION ) 4:22-md-3047-YGR  
-----)

THIS DOCUMENT RELATES TO: )

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD )  
COUNTY V. META PLATFORMS INC., )  
ET AL. )

CASE NO.: 4:23-CV-03065 )

Confidential - Pursuant to Protective Order

VIDEOTAPED DEPOSITION OF

SEAN W. BULSON, Ed.D.

Harford County Public Schools Central

Administration Building

102 South Hickory Avenue,

Bell Air, Maryland

Friday, May 9, 2025, 11:25 a.m.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 2

1 APPEARANCES:

2 For Plaintiff:

3 BY: KENNETH S. BYRD, ESQ.  
4 BY: NICK W. LEE, ESQ. (VIA ZOOM)  
5 Lief Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein  
6 250 Hudson Street, 8th Floor  
7 New York, New York 10013  
8 212.355.9500  
9 kbyrd@lchb.com  
10 nlee@lchb.com

11 For Plaintiff:

12 BY: MATTHEW P. LEGG, ESQ. (VIA ZOOM)  
13 Brockstedt Mandalas Federico LLC  
14 2850 Quarry Lake Drive - Suite 220  
15 Baltimore, Maryland 21209  
16 410.421.7777  
17 mlegg@lawbmf.com

18 For the Defendants Meta Platforms, Inc., f/k/a  
19 Facebook, Inc.; Facebook Holdings, LLC; Facebook  
20 Operations, LLC; Facebook Payments, Inc.; Facebook  
21 Technologies, LLC; Instagram, LLC; Sculus, Inc.;  
22 and Mark Elliot Zuckerberg:

23 BY: EBEN S. FLASTER, ESQ.  
24 BY: WILLIAM S. WALBERG (VIA ZOOM)  
25 Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP  
Two Commerce Square  
2001 Market Street, Suite 3000  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-7014  
215.278.2555  
eflaster@shb.com  
wwalberg@shb.com

For the Defendant Snap:

BY: PAUL A. COTLER, ESQ. (VIA ZOOM)  
Kirkland & Ellis LLP  
2005 Market Street, Suite 1000  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103  
215.268.5002  
paul.cotler@kirkland.com

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 3

APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

For the Defendants Alphabet Inc., Google LLC, and  
YouTube LLC:

BY: J. ANDREW KEYES, ESQ.

BY: LYDIA WEIANT, ESQ.

Williams & Connolly LLP

680 Maine Street SW

Washington, DC 20024

202.434.5584

akeyes@wc.com

lweiانت@wc.com

For the Defendants TikTok, Ltd.; TikTok, LLC;  
TikTok, Inc.; ByteDance Ltd.; and ByteDance, Inc.:

BY: DANIEL C. SALE, ESQ. (VIA ZOOM)

King & Spalding LLP

1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Suite 900

Washington, D.C. 20006

202.626.2640

dsale@KSLAW.com

Also Present: Ryan Sohmer, Videographer  
Jacob Arndt, Exhibit Technician  
Kimberly Neal, General Counsel  
Harford County Public Schools

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 4

## I N D E X

PAGE

EXAMINATION BY MR. KEYES 6

## E X H I B I T S

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
--------	-------------	------

EXHIBIT 1	Plaintiff Fact Sheet - School Districts	8
-----------	---	---

EXHIBIT 2	Plaintiff Fact Sheet - School Districts (Supplemental)	14
-----------	--	----

EXHIBIT 3	Plaintiff Board of Education of Harford County's Supplemental Answer to Defendants' Interrogatory No. 3	18
-----------	---	----

EXHIBIT 4	Plaintiff Board of Education of Harford County's Amended Objections and Responses to Defendants' Interrogatories (Set 3)	32
-----------	--	----

EXHIBIT 5	Emails dated 2/22/21, Subject: MCAP, Bates HCPS_00557536-538	60
-----------	--	----

EXHIBIT 6	Emails, top one dated 1/7/19, Subject: Mental Health Initiatives, HCPS_00164400	108
-----------	---	-----

EXHIBIT 7	Harford County Public Schools Proposed Mental Health Initiatives, Education and Raising Awareness, Bates HCPS_00164401-02	113
-----------	---	-----

EXHIBIT 8	Emails, top one dated 4/29/22, Subject: Safety Feedback, Bates HCPS_00339224-226	123
-----------	--	-----

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 5

1 EXHIBIT 9 Document titled Mental Health 142  
Initiative, Bates

2 HCPS\_00000158-159

3 EXHIBIT 10 Executive Leadership Team 148  
Agenda - 3/16/23, Bates

4 HCPS\_00009831-835

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 6

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 \* \* \*

3 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are now going on  
4 the record. My name is Ryan Sohmer. I'm a  
5 videographer for Golkow, a Veritext division.  
6 Today's date is May 9th, 2025. The time now is  
7 11:25 a.m. This deposition is being held at  
8 102 South Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland.

9 We're here in the matter of Social  
10 Media Adolescent Addiction/Personal Injury Products  
11 Liability Litigation filed in the United States  
12 District Court, Northern District of California.  
13 Our deponent is Sean Bulson.

14 Counsel will be noted on the  
15 stenographic record. Our court reporter is  
16 Cindy Hayden, and will now swear in the witness.  
17 You may proceed.

18 \* \* \*

19 SEAN W. BULSON, Ed.D.,  
20 having been first duly sworn, was examined and  
21 testified as follows:

22 \* \* \*

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY MR. KEYES:

25 Q. Good morning, Dr. Bulson. We've met

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 7

1 before, but for the record, my name is Andrew  
2 Keyes. I'm with the law firm of Williams &  
3 Connolly, and we represent the Google and YouTube  
4 defendants.

5 Would you please state your full name.

6 A. Sean Bulson.

7 Q. Do you understand that you are still  
8 under oath?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Do you understand that you are still  
11 under oath and giving testimony as if you were in a  
12 courtroom before a judge and a jury?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. I took your deposition earlier today as  
15 a corporate representative of Harford County Public  
16 Schools on a number of topics, and you told me in  
17 that deposition that you had met with the lawyers  
18 for Harford County Public Schools three times, and  
19 you had reviewed documents that we've marked as  
20 Exhibits 1, 2 and 3.

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Did you do anything else to prepare for  
23 this deposition of you as a fact witness?

24 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

25 You can answer.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 8

1 THE WITNESS: No.

2 BY MR. KEYES:

3 Q. Okay.

4 (BULSON EXHIBIT 1, Plaintiff Fact Sheet  
5 - School Districts, was marked for identification.)

6 BY MR. KEYES:

7 Q. I'm handing you what has been marked as  
8 Bulson Exhibit 1. This is titled "Plaintiff Fact  
9 Sheet - School Districts." If you'd turn to the  
10 final page. It's Page 40.

11 Are you there?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. There is a certification. And do you  
14 see the certification says: I have made reasonable  
15 inquiries to answer the foregoing questions. Based  
16 on my personal knowledge and the information  
17 provided by other district employees, I declare  
18 under penalty of perjury that the information  
19 provided in this plaintiff fact sheet is complete,  
20 true and correct to the best of my knowledge and  
21 information, and that I have provided all of the  
22 requested documents that are reasonably accessible  
23 to me and/or my attorneys, to the best of my  
24 knowledge?

25 Did I read that certification

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 9

1 correctly?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. There is a signature on here that  
4 purports to be your electronic signature. Do you  
5 see that?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And it's associated with the date  
8 March 25th, 2024. Do you see that?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Did you either affix or authorize  
11 someone to affix your electronic signature to this  
12 certification on March 25th, 2024?

13 A. I authorized someone.

14 Q. Prior to authorizing someone to affix  
15 your signature to this certification, what, if  
16 anything, did you do to verify the accuracy of the  
17 answers on the prior 39 pages?

18 A. It was a very perfunctory review, I  
19 would say. This was something I delegated. I  
20 didn't go beyond that to verify this information.

21 Q. Okay. So when you say "a perfunctory  
22 review," what did you do?

23 A. This -- this would have come in as an  
24 electronic document. So, literally, I believe I  
25 was -- I believe I was out of town when this came

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 10

1 through. So it would have been a quick review on  
2 my phone, just sort of scrolling through, but to  
3 get an understanding of basically what we were  
4 providing.

5 But otherwise, I didn't confirm any of  
6 the numbers. I trust the team to produce pretty  
7 straightforward stuff like this.

8 Q. Okay. Did you make any reasonable  
9 inquiries to answer the questions in this?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Did you make any reasonable inquiries  
12 to check on whether the answers are accurate?

13 MR. BYRD: Hold on. Object to form.

14 You can't disclose communications with  
15 your counsel or directions from your counsel. So  
16 you can answer beyond anything -- you're able to  
17 answer if it's anything beyond the conversations  
18 you had with your counsel is the best way to  
19 describe it. You can go ahead.

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. Yeah. The question is: Did you --

22 A. So, I mean, the -- the answer is no. I  
23 mean, I -- this would have come from counsel. So  
24 any discussion of what it was and why I was doing  
25 it, you know, would have been -- so, short answer:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 11

1 No.

2 Q. Has it ever come to your attention that  
3 any of the answers completed by Harford County  
4 Public Schools are not accurate?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Has it ever come to your attention that  
7 any of the information supplied by Harford County  
8 Public Schools in Exhibit 3 [sic] is not accurate?

9 MR. BYRD: Objection.

10 Hold on. I get you want to ask this,  
11 and it's fine that you want to -- if you want to go  
12 through one by one and do it, that's fine. But if  
13 it came to his attention, it would be from counsel.

14 So you can't answer that question  
15 either yes or no, really, because it is disclosing  
16 communication or noncommunication from your  
17 counsel. So I have to instruct you not to answer  
18 the way you phrased it. Now, you -- you can ask  
19 other stuff about this fact sheet but not that.

20 THE WITNESS: But you also just said  
21 "Exhibit 3." This is Exhibit 1, correct?

22 BY MR. KEYES:

23 Q. You're right.

24 MR. BYRD: Yeah.

25 BY MR. KEYES:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 12

1 Q. Let me rephrase it.

2 A. Let me just --

3 MR. BYRD: Yeah.

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. Yeah.

6 Has it ever come to your attention that  
7 any of the information supplied by Harford County  
8 Public Schools in Exhibit 1 is not accurate?

9 MR. BYRD: Okay. Objection.

10 Don't answer the question if any  
11 information came from your counsel.

12 And you can ask a better question is  
13 what I want to put on the record. Like, I'm not  
14 denying your ability to find what you need but  
15 not -- not with that question.

16 MR. KEYES: It's a yes-or-no question.

17 MR. BYRD: No.

18 BY MR. KEYES:

19 Q. Has it ever come to your attention that  
20 any of the information supplied by Harford County  
21 Public Schools in Exhibit 1 is not accurate?

22 MR. BYRD: First of all, object to  
23 form. Foundation. The only way it comes to his  
24 attention is through counsel. You know that. So  
25 you're asking -- you're --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 13

1 MR. KEYES: I don't know that.

2 MR. BYRD: Well, you are.

3 MR. KEYES: And you don't know that  
4 either.

5 MR. BYRD: If you want to ask him if  
6 anybody other --

7 MR. KEYES: Mr. Byrd --

8 MR. BYRD: -- than his counsel, you can  
9 ask that.

10 MR. KEYES: Well, that's not my  
11 question. And if you want to instruct him not to  
12 answer --

13 MR. BYRD: Yeah, I'm going to  
14 instruct --

15 MR. KEYES: -- that's your prerogative.

16 MR. BYRD: -- you not to answer,  
17 because you know you're just directly asking for  
18 attorney-client communications. And if I did that  
19 to your client, y'all would be out of the seats.

20 MR. KEYES: There -- there's a lot of  
21 speculation on your part. I'd ask you to limit  
22 yourself to objections or instructions so the  
23 record is clear.

24 MR. BYRD: I'm telling you --

25 MR. KEYES: For --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 14

1 MR. BYRD: I'm making the record clear  
2 about why I'm instructing him not to answer.

3 MR. KEYES: Mr. Byrd, I'm going to make  
4 a standing request that for the rest of this  
5 deposition you stop interrupting me. I have not  
6 interrupted you, so please don't interrupt me.

7 MR. BYRD: We'll let you have a  
8 standing request.

9 MR. KEYES: Thank you.

10 BY MR. KEYES:

11 Q. Dr. Bulson, has it ever come to your  
12 attention that any of the information supplied by  
13 Harford County Public Schools in Exhibit 1 is not  
14 accurate?

15 MR. BYRD: Don't answer that question  
16 if any information came to you from counsel, inside  
17 or outside counsel. But you can answer otherwise.

18 THE WITNESS: No.

19 (BULSON EXHIBIT 2, Plaintiff Fact Sheet  
20 - School Districts (Supplemental), was marked for  
21 identification.)

22 BY MR. KEYES:

23 Q. I'm showing you what has been marked as  
24 Bulson Exhibit 2. This is titled "Plaintiff Fact  
25 Sheet - School Districts (Supplemental)." And if

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 15

1 you turn to the last page, there's a certification.  
2 Do you see that?

3 A. I do.

4 Q. That certification says, quote: I have  
5 made reasonable inquiries to answer the foregoing  
6 questions. Based on my personal knowledge and the  
7 information provided by other district employees, I  
8 declare under penalty of perjury that the  
9 information provided in this plaintiff fact sheet  
10 is complete, true and correct to the best of my  
11 knowledge and information, and that I have provided  
12 all of the requested documents that are reasonably  
13 accessible to me and/or my attorneys, to the best  
14 of my knowledge, end quote.

15 Did I read that correctly?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And there purports to be an electronic  
18 signature for you affixed to the certification. Is  
19 that your electronic signature?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And did you either affix that signature  
22 or authorize someone else to affix your electronic  
23 signature to this certification on June 3rd, 2024?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What, if anything, did you do to review

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 16

1 the content in Bulson Exhibit 2 before your  
2 electronic signature was affixed to the  
3 certification?

4 MR. BYRD: So, object to form.

5 And instruct you not to answer anything  
6 that you did or -- I mean, that an attorney said to  
7 you or that you did at their direction. You can  
8 answer otherwise.

9 THE WITNESS: This was last year. I  
10 don't recall since the date it was signed. That  
11 was --

12 BY MR. KEYES:

13 Q. I don't understand what you mean,  
14 "I don't recall since" --

15 A. In other words --

16 Q. -- "the date it was signed."

17 A. In other words, it -- it was signed a  
18 year ago. I don't recall how I interacted with  
19 this prior to signing it.

20 Q. Okay. You don't have a recollection of  
21 reviewing it?

22 A. Correct.

23 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

24 THE WITNESS: Correct.

25 BY MR. KEYES:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 17

1 Q. Since you affixed or authorized someone  
2 to affix your electronic signature to the  
3 certification, has it come to your attention that  
4 any of these answers that were completed by  
5 Harford County Public Schools are inaccurate?

6 MR. BYRD: Okay. So the same objection  
7 I had for the other document.

8 Don't answer that question if any  
9 communications came from attorneys.

10 THE WITNESS: No.

11 BY MR. KEYES:

12 Q. And since you affixed or authorized  
13 someone to affix your electronic signature to the  
14 certification, has it come to your attention that  
15 any of the information that was filled out by  
16 Harford County Public Schools in this exhibit is  
17 inaccurate?

18 MR. BYRD: Same instruction.

19 THE WITNESS: No.

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. Did you review either Bulson Exhibit 1  
22 or Bulson Exhibit 2 in preparation for your  
23 deposition?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Have you reviewed either Bulson

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 18

1 Exhibit 1 or Bulson Exhibit 2 since the time your  
2 signature was applied?

3 A. No.

4 (BULSON EXHIBIT 3, Plaintiff Board of  
5 Education of Harford County's Supplemental Answer  
6 to Defendants' Interrogatory No. 3, was marked for  
7 identification.)

8 BY MR. KEYES:

9 Q. I'm showing you what has been marked as  
10 Bulson Exhibit 3. This is "Plaintiff Board of  
11 Education of Harford County Supplemental Answer to  
12 Defendants' Interrogatory Number 3."

13 And if you'd turn to Page 5, there's  
14 another verification. Do you see that?

15 A. I do.

16 Q. There purports to be an electronic  
17 signature from you dated December 17th of 2024. Is  
18 that your signature?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Did you apply it or authorize someone  
21 to apply it on or about December 17th, 2024?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Before you did that, did you review the  
24 document?

25 MR. BYRD: Well, object to form.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 19

1                   Again, if you did something at the  
2                   direction of your counsel, you don't need to get  
3                   into that. But I guess you can answer if you  
4                   were -- if you recall reviewing it or not.

5                   THE WITNESS: Again, I don't recall  
6                   specifically.

7                   BY MR. KEYES:

8                   Q. Okay. Do you recall reviewing any  
9                   answer to an interrogatory relating to any  
10                  instances of vandalism or property damage?

11                  MR. BYRD: Object to form.

12                  And don't answer that question to any  
13                  extent that it involves communications from your  
14                  attorneys. But you can answer otherwise.

15                  THE WITNESS: Yeah, no.

16                  BY MR. KEYES:

17                  Q. Are you able to identify for me any  
18                  specific instance of vandalism or property damage  
19                  that Harford County Public Schools attributes to  
20                  any of the defendants?

21                  MR. BYRD: Well, object to form. This  
22                  is an individual depo. He's not speaking on behalf  
23                  of Harford County Public Schools.

24                  But you can answer it in your  
25                  individual capacity.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 20

1 THE WITNESS: Well, I shared in my  
2 earlier testimony a specific example I gave about  
3 Havre de Grace Middle-High School and the damage  
4 they sustained as a result of a TikTok challenge.  
5 I contend -- I mean, as I said, that was happening  
6 at other schools, other high schools, in  
7 particular, but it was more of an acute concern at  
8 Havre de Grace.

9 So I don't recall exactly which other  
10 schools I heard, but I -- I specifically remember  
11 having that conversation with a principal at  
12 C. Milton Wright. I don't know how many others.  
13 But challenges with restrooms in particular related  
14 to that particular TikTok challenge. I'd have to  
15 think more about other examples.

16 BY MR. KEYES:

17 Q. Okay. You mentioned that one TikTok  
18 challenge. Are you able to identify for me any  
19 other specific instance of vandalism or property  
20 damage that Harford County Public Schools  
21 attributes to any of the defendants?

22 MR. BYRD: Object to form. And same  
23 condition, that he's not speaking on behalf of the  
24 school. And he said --

25 But you can answer.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 21

1 THE WITNESS: Offhand, other specific  
2 instances aren't coming to mind right now. But I  
3 may be able to think of others later. But, yeah,  
4 nothing is coming to mind at the moment.

5 BY MR. KEYES:

6 Q. Okay. And with respect to the one  
7 TikTok challenge you mentioned, you did testify  
8 earlier that that involved damage to bathrooms at  
9 various schools, correct?

10 A. Mostly bathrooms. I don't recall --  
11 because it wasn't so specific just to bathrooms --  
12 bathroom fixtures, but I think that's where we saw  
13 most of the damage.

14 Q. Are you able to identify for me any  
15 schools besides Havre de Grace where as a result of  
16 that challenge students vandalized school property?

17 A. As I said, I heard it from other  
18 principals. Specifically, I recall a conversation  
19 with a principal at C. Milton Wright. I don't  
20 remember specific conversations elsewhere.

21 But bathrooms and -- and -- at the  
22 time -- I mean, we've had challenges with bathrooms  
23 for a variety of reasons. That's also where fights  
24 would happen and those sorts of things.

25 And so I don't recall others that had

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 22

1 the same vandalism. But knowing that it was  
2 something I was discussing with -- as I heard about  
3 it in one place, I would -- I would ask other  
4 principals if they had that. I just don't recall  
5 specifically --

6 Q. Are you able to --

7 A. -- who I spoke to.

8 Q. Are you able to identify the dollars  
9 that Harford County Public Schools spent either  
10 repairing or replacing property at any of its  
11 schools as a result of that challenge?

12 A. Not personally. That's not something  
13 I've -- I've reviewed. That's something I sort of  
14 leave to our facilities folks.

15 Q. And with respect to that -- that  
16 challenge, what is your understanding of the reason  
17 for attributing the damage to any of the defendants  
18 as opposed to the students that committed the  
19 vandalism?

20 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

21 So, again, if your knowledge of how  
22 this gets attributed to the defendants through the  
23 lawsuit comes from counsel, you can't disclose  
24 that. If you have some independent knowledge of  
25 why you think or believe that, you know, YouTube,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 23

1 Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, you know, are driving  
2 the cause of this, you can speak to that.

3 BY MR. KEYES:

4 Q. Yeah.

5 My question is: What is your  
6 understanding of the reason for attributing the  
7 damage for that challenge to any of the defendants  
8 as opposed to the students that committed the  
9 vandalism?

10 MR. BYRD: Yeah, but that doesn't  
11 change my objection because --

12 MR. KEYES: It doesn't. It's the same  
13 question. I want him to understand the question  
14 posed.

15 THE WITNESS: Okay.

16 MR. BYRD: So I have the same  
17 objection, if you want me to state it again.

18 But you can answer with my instruction  
19 that, obviously, your understanding about how  
20 things get attributed to defendants includes  
21 conversations with counsel. So don't disclose that  
22 part.

23 THE WITNESS: Yeah. Without going into  
24 the mechanics of how it got into the documentation,  
25 I mean, the attribution for that is really, I mean,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 24

1 the platform it exists on and the fact that we're  
2 not aware of any efforts by the companies to do  
3 anything to limit or contain those types of  
4 challenges that cause harm.

5 And -- and as I said, I have -- between  
6 my administrators and my head of communications, I  
7 have people who are definitely much more versed in  
8 the interactions with social media than I am. And  
9 so I would expect that they could produce many more  
10 specific examples.

11 But at the same time, the fact that  
12 these -- you know, it's very clear in this case,  
13 for example, which platform that was -- that  
14 particular challenge was occurring on and -- so  
15 that's one that, again, has jumped out to me.

16 But, again, I'm sure with my team's  
17 help, I could think of more. But at the same time,  
18 like I said, I mean, this isn't just a thing that  
19 happens. I mean, it was called a "TikTok  
20 challenge" for a reason.

21 BY MR. KEYES:

22 Q. Your understanding is, it was a  
23 challenge that some users posted on TikTok that was  
24 then widely disseminated to other users who copied  
25 it. Is that fair?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 25

1           A.     That appears to be the manner in which  
2     this spreads.

3           Q.     Other than the fact that TikTok was the  
4     platform by which this user challenge was  
5     disseminated to other users, are you able to  
6     identify anything that gives cause to blame TikTok  
7     for the challenge?

8           A.     I guess, frankly, I can't understand --  
9                 MR. BYRD:   Object to form.   Hold on one  
10    second.

11                THE WITNESS:   Okay.

12                MR. BYRD:   Again, other than  
13    conversations with counsel, you can answer that.

14                THE WITNESS:   Okay.   I -- I guess my  
15    feelings on the matter, I -- I -- I'm not a  
16    technology expert.   I don't run these companies.   I  
17    don't know how it works.   But, I mean, the  
18    destructive nature of some of these challenges, I  
19    don't understand why they can't be addressed,  
20    stopped, somehow removed from the platforms before  
21    they're causing harm.

22    BY MR. KEYES:

23           Q.     Do you know whether TikTok took steps  
24    to stop the spread of this challenge when it came  
25    to TikTok's attention?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 26

1 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

2 You can answer, other than  
3 conversations with counsel.

4 THE WITNESS: I do not.

5 BY MR. KEYES:

6 Q. Did you reach out to TikTok when this  
7 challenge came to your attention to ask TikTok to  
8 do something about it?

9 A. When this came to our attention?

10 Q. Your attention.

11 A. My attention. I did not.

12 Q. Did you reach out to TikTok when this  
13 challenge came to the attention of someone else in  
14 Harford County Public Schools?

15 A. I did not.

16 Q. Are you aware of anyone in  
17 Harford County Public Schools' administration  
18 reaching out to TikTok when the challenge came to  
19 its attention to ask TikTok to do something about  
20 it?

21 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

22 And, again, if there's any  
23 conversations with counsel with you regarding their  
24 reaching out, don't discuss that. You can go  
25 ahead.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 27

1 THE WITNESS: At that time, I don't  
2 recall. Any outreach that would happen in the  
3 course of an investigation around these things most  
4 likely would have happened through my -- through  
5 Donovan Brooks, our security manager. And he would  
6 be working in collaboration with the sheriff's  
7 office or whoever -- I mean, we also have three  
8 municipalities' police departments we work with.

9 So when there are investigations that  
10 involve social media, any outreach directly to  
11 social media normally would go through law  
12 enforcement. So if -- if there was any of that  
13 that occurred -- I don't recall specifically in  
14 these cases if that did occur during the  
15 investigations, but -- well, I'll stop there.

16 BY MR. KEYES:

17 Q. Yeah.

18 So you are not aware of anyone in  
19 Harford County Public Schools' administration  
20 reaching out to TikTok when the challenge came to  
21 its attention to ask TikTok to do something about  
22 it, correct?

23 THE WITNESS: Specifically, at the  
24 time, I'm not aware of it.

25 BY MR. KEYES:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 28

1 Q. Okay. Do you agree that the property  
2 damage that these schools sustained in connection  
3 with this TikTok challenge was committed by  
4 students?

5 A. I believe that.

6 Q. Do you agree that the property damage  
7 that these schools sustained was vandalism by those  
8 students?

9 A. For this particular challenge, yes.

10 Q. Did Harford County Public Schools press  
11 charges against any of the students who engaged in  
12 that vandalism?

13 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

14 You can answer that, but just -- we're  
15 getting close to where you would have had  
16 conversations with counsel.

17 THE WITNESS: Yeah.

18 MR. BYRD: So don't disclose those.

19 THE WITNESS: Well, in this case, I  
20 don't recall how many -- if or when students were  
21 caught and identified for this.

22 BY MR. KEYES:

23 Q. Did Harford County Public Schools seek  
24 restitution from any of the students who engaged in  
25 that vandalism?

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 29

1           A.    I don't recall. That would have most  
2   likely happened at the local school level or risen  
3   maybe as high as my ed services team, but that  
4   wouldn't necessarily come to me.

5           Q.    Did Harford County Public Schools  
6   receive any restitution from any of the students  
7   who engaged in that vandalism?

8           A.    I don't know the answer to that.

9           Q.    Since we've been talking about this  
10  challenge for a few minutes, are you aware of any  
11  other challenge involving social media that  
12  resulted in damage to any Harford County Public  
13  Schools property?

14               MR. BYRD: Object to form.

15               You can answer.

16           THE WITNESS: So, yes. There -- like I  
17  said, there was a challenge that came to my  
18  attention yesterday, which I understand -- I think  
19  we have a time frame for this lawsuit.

20               But that challenge was very concerning  
21  also because it's a -- it's a -- one I hadn't heard  
22  of before where it's being recommended to people  
23  who take this challenge to either use paper clips  
24  or pencil lead or something to insert into various  
25  ports in their school-distributed devices to make

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 30

1     them inoperable, which, you know, we have millions  
2     of dollars invested in those.

3             And, I mean, it would be unclear what  
4     the cost to the district versus the cost to the  
5     families and the kids might be. But it's a -- kind  
6     of a senseless challenge, and we haven't yet  
7     realized, you know, what that might lead to.

8     BY MR. KEYES:

9             Q.     Are you --

10            MR. BYRD: Hold up.

11            THE WITNESS: So other specific  
12     examples, I'm -- I -- I don't recall others off the  
13     top of my head. But like I said, if -- you know,  
14     to the degree that they're out there, I think  
15     between Jillian Lader and Donovan Brooks, they  
16     probably could produce many more.

17     BY MR. KEYES:

18            Q.     Okay. So with respect to challenges  
19     involving social media that resulted in damage to  
20     any Harford County Public Schools property, you  
21     would point to the TikTok challenge that  
22     involved --

23            A.     Those are the most specific.

24            Q.     -- the damage --

25            A.     Yeah.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 31

1 Q. And the TikTok challenge yesterday,  
2 correct?

3 A. As an -- again, as a new one that I've  
4 become aware of, but yes.

5 Q. And are you aware of any property  
6 damage that's been sustained as a result of the  
7 challenge yesterday?

8 A. Not yet.

9 Q. If students follow the challenge  
10 yesterday, do you agree that would be vandalism?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And would -- would you seek to --  
13 restitution from the students who vandalize school  
14 property --

15 MR. BYRD: Object --

16 BY MR. KEYES:

17 Q. -- as a result of that challenge --

18 MR. BYRD: I'm sorry. Object to form.  
19 Hypothetical. Assumes facts not in evidence.

20 Also, don't disclose any conversations  
21 with counsel.

22 THE WITNESS: We communicated the  
23 presence of this challenge to families, and in that  
24 communication, indicated that, you know, such  
25 deliberate behavior would void the warranties that

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 32

1 some of our families -- the insurance policies that  
2 some of our families purchased for those devices.

3 So if -- it was to avoid -- if -- if  
4 those warranties were voided as a result of student  
5 action in this case, our practice would be to  
6 pursue restitution for the -- for the cost to  
7 repair the device. That would be our practice.

8 Again, it hasn't -- to my knowledge,  
9 nothing in the communication I read indicated that  
10 this had happened yet. So I don't know where we  
11 stand with that. But maybe there were examples  
12 that just weren't included in the message that went  
13 out.

14 (BULSON EXHIBIT 4, Plaintiff Board of  
15 Education of Harford County's Amended Objections  
16 and Responses to Defendants' Interrogatories  
17 (Set 3), was marked for identification.)

18 BY MR. KEYES:

19 Q. I'm showing you what has been marked as  
20 Bulson Exhibit 4. And I'm returning to you a copy  
21 of HCPS Exhibit 3.

22 A. Oh, okay. That's this guy. Yes. All  
23 right.

24 Q. Okay. Have you seen Bulson Exhibit 4  
25 before?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 33

1 MR. BYRD: So, object to form. And  
2 just noting for these questions, I'll have a  
3 standing objection that it's in his individual  
4 capacity, of course, and beyond the scope of his  
5 individual capacity, perhaps, not in a 30(b)(6)  
6 capacity.

7 THE WITNESS: Again, I've signed this,  
8 but -- I can't find the date when I signed it.  
9 But, no, I -- I don't recall reviewing this in this  
10 form.

11 BY MR. KEYES:

12 Q. Okay. Turning your attention to  
13 HCPS Exhibit 3.

14 A. This one?

15 Q. Yes. Do you have that in front of you?

16 A. I do.

17 Q. Okay. This is something you previously  
18 testified you had seen in preparation for your  
19 deposition?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Okay. Would you turn to the --

22 MR. BYRD: Hold on a minute. Object to  
23 the form. That misstates the testimony from  
24 before. But go ahead.

25 MR. KEYES: How does it misstate the

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 34

1 testimony?

2 MR. BYRD: Well, because when you asked  
3 earlier, you said, "Did you take any notes?"

4 And he said, "Yeah, I took notes."

5 And we said we'd turned them over.

6 I don't know if he said, "This is some  
7 document that was given to me and I saw in the  
8 preparation."

9 MR. KEYES: You asked him that very  
10 question, "Is this something that you reviewed" --

11 MR. BYRD: Yeah.

12 MR. KEYES: -- "in preparation for your  
13 deposition?"

14 And my question a moment ago was, "This  
15 is something you previously testified you had seen  
16 in your preparation for your deposition?"

17 And he said, "Correct."

18 MR. BYRD: Yeah.

19 MR. KEYES: Let's move on.

20 MR. BYRD: Yeah, I think you're being  
21 silly as well. Go ahead.

22 BY MR. KEYES:

23 Q. Do you have the program/departments  
24 worksheet in front of you?

25 A. I do.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 35

1 Q. There's handwriting on it, correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Is that your handwriting?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. When did you put this handwriting on  
6 this worksheet?

7 A. Yesterday.

8 Q. Did you put this handwriting on this  
9 worksheet yesterday during your prep session with  
10 counsel?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Do you see that this worksheet is also  
13 included in Bulson Exhibit 4?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So you've seen the worksheet, but you  
16 don't recall seeing the larger document that is  
17 Exhibit 4; is that correct?

18 A. I don't recall reviewing it, yeah.

19 Q. Okay. Before your prep session with  
20 the lawyers yesterday, had you seen this  
21 program/department worksheet?

22 A. Yes. I saw it in the other two prep  
23 sessions.

24 Q. Had you --

25 A. I haven't spent much time on it, but it

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 36

1 was included.

2 Q. Okay. Before any of your three prep  
3 sessions with the lawyers, had you seen this  
4 program/department worksheet?

5 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

6 Again, don't disclose conversations  
7 with your general counsel. But go ahead.

8 THE WITNESS: I don't recall seeing  
9 anything in this format.

10 BY MR. KEYES:

11 Q. Okay. There are a number of  
12 departments and programs listed on this worksheet,  
13 yes?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Did you decide what programs or  
16 departments to include in this worksheet?

17 MR. BYRD: Sorry. Object to form.

18 Again, you can't disclose directions or  
19 communications with counsel. You can answer it,  
20 like, without doing that somehow.

21 THE WITNESS: All right.

22 BY MR. KEYES:

23 Q. Sir, none of my questions have asked  
24 for any of your communications with counsel, and --

25 MR. BYRD: You just --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 37

1 MR. KEYES: Please don't interrupt me  
2 again. Mr. Byrd, we have limited time here --

3 MR. BYRD: I get it.

4 MR. KEYES: -- because of the witness's  
5 hard stop and because we got a late start. And I  
6 haven't complained about the late start, but I am  
7 noting for the record that you are including lots  
8 and lots of objections that don't apply.

9 MR. BYRD: We'll be here --

10 BY MR. KEYES:

11 Q. So, Dr. Bulson, to speed things up, I  
12 just want to make clear, I am not asking in any of  
13 my questions about your communications with  
14 counsel. I'm asking about other facts.

15 So my pending question is: Did you  
16 decide what programs or departments to include in  
17 this worksheet?

18 MR. BYRD: Okay. Same objection about  
19 counsel. I won't respond to your comments. We did  
20 start late because of me and traffic, and I  
21 apologize for that. But we're happy to stay here  
22 as long as you need. And I would just ask that you  
23 probably -- you can ask more precise questions that  
24 avoid these objections. Go ahead.

25 BY MR. KEYES:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 38

1 Q. It's a very simple question. Did --  
2 did you decide --

3 A. I delegated this. I did not make the  
4 individual decisions about these but delegated  
5 this.

6 Q. Did you delegate it to someone on your  
7 staff?

8 A. I delegated it through counsel, so I  
9 probably should stop there.

10 Q. Okay. Then do you have an  
11 understanding of what the weight percentage column  
12 is?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. What is your understanding of what the  
15 weight percentage column is?

16 A. Time and effort that could reasonably  
17 be attributed to resources we commit to addressing  
18 what we view as challenges related to social  
19 media -- challenges related to, you know, the  
20 effect social media has on students, staff, our  
21 operations.

22 Q. Did you decide what weight percentage  
23 to assign to any of the departments or programs  
24 listed here?

25 A. No.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 39

1 Q. Did you delegate to others on your  
2 staff the task of picking a weight percentage to  
3 assign for particular departments or programs?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Does your handwriting on this page  
6 indicate which department or member of your staff  
7 you tasked with assigning a weight percentage for  
8 particular departments or programs?

9 A. Not exactly, because I didn't task them  
10 with that. It was more, this is kind of my thought  
11 exercise around who would be the right people to --  
12 to do that based on my understanding. But like I  
13 said, this was delegated.

14 Q. Okay. Well, when you saw the  
15 program/department worksheet, it already had weight  
16 percentages?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. And had you, prior to seeing that  
19 worksheet, asked anyone on your staff to go  
20 identify the weight percentage that would reflect  
21 the time and effort that could reasonably be  
22 attributed to resources that Harford County Public  
23 Schools addresses to what they view as challenges  
24 regarding the effects of social media?

25 MR. BYRD: Object to form. Don't --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 40

1 THE WITNESS: Again --

2 MR. BYRD: I'm sorry. Don't disclose  
3 communications from counsel.

4 THE WITNESS: My answer is the same.  
5 I -- I delegated this. So I was not the person who  
6 asked any of these individuals on here.

7 BY MR. KEYES:

8 Q. Okay. Well, the first line is  
9 "Instructional Salaries."

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. And you've written "ed services,"  
12 right?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Ed services is a department?

15 A. It is.

16 Q. So when you wrote "ed services," were  
17 you noting that you had delegated to ed services  
18 the task of coming up with the weight percentage  
19 or --

20 A. No. Okay. Sorry.

21 Q. -- or when you wrote "ed services,"  
22 were you identifying the department that you think  
23 is best positioned to pick a weight?

24 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

25 THE WITNESS: Well, again, I -- again,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 41

1 my exercise here would be, who is responsible for  
2 these areas, thus who would be the right person --  
3 not to produce numbers. All the numbers are going  
4 to come from our budget team.

5 But when it comes to thinking about how  
6 much time is impacted by this, yes, these are -- so  
7 ed services, when it comes to instructional  
8 salaries, you know, they're the ones who work most  
9 specifically with our schools, thus our school  
10 leaders and teachers. And so they're the ones who  
11 are most attuned to the day-to-day experiences of  
12 our teachers and our school leaders.

13 BY MR. KEYES:

14 Q. Okay. So I take your point that  
15 ed services is best attuned when it comes --

16 A. Uh-huh.

17 Q. -- to the instructional salaries  
18 department or program. Did --

19 A. Their time. Salaries -- again,  
20 anything numbers, budget team. Does that make  
21 sense?

22 Q. Yeah. I'm not asking about the  
23 subtotal column with dollars.

24 A. Got it.

25 Q. I'm not asking about the weighted total

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 42

1 column with dollars. I'm asking about the weight  
2 percentage column. And so what I'm trying to  
3 figure out is --

4 A. Yeah. Well, you just said "salaries,"  
5 I think. So when -- so, for me, I was thinking  
6 more about the time they spend.

7 So, yes, ed services would be the one  
8 to make the best estimates about the amount of --  
9 of our -- of our time that our instructional  
10 employees are spending.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. They would be the ones to identify  
13 the -- the weights.

14 Q. And then for other instructional costs,  
15 the retirement pension system, the retirement and  
16 pension system, unemployment compensation, health  
17 insurance, dental insurance, life insurance and  
18 other post-employment benefits, are they --

19 A. Most of that runs through our HR  
20 department. But, again, I wrote budget because the  
21 budget team has to figure out the cost of all these  
22 things. But most of that runs through HR.

23 Q. Okay. And then for office of the  
24 principal services, you believe ed services or  
25 budget is in the best position?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 43

1           A.    Yeah.  Ed services.  Again, they  
2   supervise principals.

3           Q.    College credit reimbursement, it's  
4   unclear to me --

5           A.    Yeah, I didn't answer that one.  I  
6   think I might have just skipped that line.

7           Q.    Looking at --

8           A.    There's --

9           Q.    -- it now --

10          A.    There would be a --

11          Q.    -- who would you put?

12          A.    There would be a mix because our -- our  
13   college credits work kind of sits in two places.  
14   The reimbursements flow through ed services and our  
15   office of counseling, which sit -- which sits in  
16   student services under Mr. Hennigan.

17          Q.    So who would you list for college  
18   credit reimbursement?

19          A.    I would probably expect an answer  
20   either from ed services -- well, again, I think we  
21   could ask both to get them to agree to that.  It's  
22   one of the smaller percentages, but --

23          Q.    When you say "both," you mean  
24   ed services or student services?

25          A.    Or counseling.  Yes.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 44

1 Q. Okay. Office of the principal  
2 salaries, you list ed services as budget as being  
3 most knowledgeable?

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. Is that a "yes"?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Legal services, you list Kimberly and  
8 Lauren as being most knowledgeable?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Who are Lauren and Kimberly, for the  
11 record?

12 A. Our legal office. Our attorneys.

13 Q. For career and technology programs, you  
14 believe that CIA is most knowledgeable?

15 A. Curriculum instruction. And it's  
16 office of curriculum instruction assessment. So  
17 our curriculum office where the current technology  
18 education department rests.

19 Q. For the office of elementary and middle  
20 and high schools, you believe ed services --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- would be most knowledgeable?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. For communications, you believe Jillian  
25 would be most knowledgeable?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 45

1 A. Manager of communications, yes.

2 Q. For family and community partnerships,  
3 you believe Mary Beth would be most knowledgeable?

4 A. Mary Beth Stapleton. Again, manager of  
5 family and community partnerships.

6 Q. For safety and security, you believe  
7 Donovan would be most knowledgeable?

8 A. Donovan Brooks.

9 Q. For psychological services, you believe  
10 Buck or Steve R. would be most knowledgeable?

11 A. Yeah. Bernard Hennigan, Buck, is the  
12 supervisor -- is the assistant superintendent over  
13 student services. Psychological services report to  
14 him. Steve Richard [sic] is currently the  
15 supervisor of psychological services. So the two  
16 of them would have come up with an answer related  
17 to that.

18 Q. For pupil personnel services, you  
19 believe Buck or Buzz would be most knowledgeable?

20 A. Yeah. Bernard Hennigan, again,  
21 superintendent for student support services.  
22 And -- and Buzz Williams is the -- I forget his  
23 exact title -- supervisor who pupil personnel  
24 services report to him.

25 Q. For school counseling services, you

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 46

1 believe Buck or someone else?

2 A. LaWanda.

3 Q. LaWanda. Okay.

4 A. You're doing pretty good with my  
5 handwriting. Bernard Hennigan, assistant  
6 superintendent of student support services.  
7 Counseling reports to him and our head of  
8 counseling, LaWanda Brown.

9 Q. And for office of technology and  
10 information, you believe Drew would be most  
11 knowledgeable?

12 A. Drew Moore, director of the office of  
13 technology information.

14 Q. Okay. So you've identified, then, in  
15 your handwriting, with one addition for college  
16 credit reimbursement, the person or department you  
17 believe would be most knowledgeable in that area,  
18 correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Did the departments or people you've  
21 listed in handwriting on this page pick the weights  
22 in the weight percentage column?

23 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

24 THE WITNESS: This is where I would  
25 kind of stop --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 47

1 MR. BYRD: Again, no conversations  
2 with --

3 THE WITNESS: Right.

4 MR. BYRD: -- attorneys. But you  
5 can --

6 THE WITNESS: There you go.

7 MR. BYRD: -- discuss --

8 THE WITNESS: This is -- this is where  
9 I -- I mean, again, I did not discuss this with  
10 those individuals. This was a conversation with my  
11 attorney.

12 BY MR. KEYES:

13 Q. Okay. And, again, recognizing that you  
14 put in handwriting the department or staff members  
15 you think would be most knowledgeable for that  
16 department or program, I want to know who actually  
17 picked the weights that are listed in the weight  
18 percentage column.

19 MR. BYRD: Object to form. Asked and  
20 answered.

21 And then you can answer to the extent  
22 you don't disclose communications with counsel.

23 BY MR. KEYES:

24 Q. I don't want to know about your  
25 conversations with counsel. I just want to know,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 48

1 who picked the weight for each department or  
2 program?

3 MR. BYRD: Same objection and  
4 instruction.

5 Go ahead.

6 THE WITNESS: Yeah. I guess what I  
7 would say is, because this conversation was -- was  
8 all mediated through counsel, I can't confirm it  
9 was these people, if that makes sense, only that  
10 these would be the people I would choose.

11 BY MR. KEYES:

12 Q. Okay. So is it accurate to say that  
13 either you don't know who picked the weight  
14 percentages, or if you know, you only know from  
15 conversations with counsel?

16 A. Yeah, I would argue that's an accurate  
17 statement. I'm sorry. That's an accurate  
18 statement.

19 Q. That is accurate?

20 A. To the best of my understanding of your  
21 question, yeah.

22 Q. Okay. Yeah. Again, I'm not trying to  
23 get into your conversations --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. -- with counsel. I'm trying to figure

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 49

1 out who picked the weights. And I take it that you  
2 said, "I didn't have any conversation with any of  
3 these people about picking the weights."

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. And, therefore, either you don't know  
6 who picked the weights or what you do know comes  
7 from conversation with counsel?

8 MR. BYRD: Object to form. The way  
9 you're asking it --

10 THE WITNESS: I guess I feel like I  
11 just answered that question.

12 MR. BYRD: To the extent you know  
13 anything -- you know anything from counsel,  
14 don't -- don't answer, and then you can ask  
15 beyond -- you can answer beyond what.

16 BY MR. KEYES:

17 Q. Is that a correct statement?  
18 Therefore, you either don't know who picked the  
19 weights or what you do know comes from conversation  
20 with counsel?

21 MR. BYRD: Well, yeah, but then that's  
22 telling what you know from counsel. So --

23 MR. KEYES: No, it's not. It's an "or"  
24 statement. I asked it precisely this way to  
25 address your purported concern about somehow

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 50

1 invading privilege.

2 MR. BYRD: You're literally are [sic]  
3 making -- the "or" says, "or you know something  
4 from counsel," which, obviously, explicitly asks  
5 for communications from counsel.

6 MR. KEYES: It doesn't.

7 MR. BYRD: So don't ask -- answer that  
8 part of the question. But go ahead.

9 BY MR. KEYES:

10 Q. You can answer.

11 MR. BYRD: Beyond -- beyond any  
12 discussions.

13 THE WITNESS: Like I said, I have  
14 shared that -- I didn't speak specifically with  
15 these people. I have discussed with counsel  
16 information related to this.

17 BY MR. KEYES:

18 Q. Okay. And separate from conversations  
19 with counsel, did you speak with any of your staff  
20 about the process by which --

21 A. No.

22 Q. -- the weight percentages were  
23 assigned?

24 Okay. Are you able to tell me, then,  
25 how the people in a particular listed department or

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 51

1 program spent their time on something having to do  
2 with the effects of social media --

3 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. -- for the listed percentage of time?

6 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

7 THE WITNESS: So you're not asking  
8 about how they spent their time preparing this but  
9 just in general how their work might connect to  
10 percentages like this?

11 BY MR. KEYES:

12 Q. Yeah. You didn't pick the percentages?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. And you haven't talked to the people  
15 who did pick the percentages. So are you able to  
16 tell me what people in a particular department or  
17 program were doing for the -- for the time that  
18 falls within the percentage weight listed here, or  
19 do we need to go talk to the people in the  
20 departments --

21 A. I think in most cases you would need to  
22 talk to them specifically to justify the  
23 percentages that have been chosen.

24 Again, I have anecdotes. I can also  
25 point to kind of bigger-picture issues we're

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 52

1 dealing with related to social media. And I can  
2 see, you know, just my assessment of what's here,  
3 how it might be -- again, I could --

4 Q. You can give me big -- big picture --

5 A. I -- I --

6 Q. -- and you can give me an educated  
7 guess, but it's still a guess?

8 A. Exactly.

9 Q. Okay. That's for how the time was  
10 spent?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. My sister question is: Are you able to  
13 tell me what the people in these departments or  
14 programs would do with the time that falls within  
15 this weight percentage if they hadn't spent that --  
16 that percentage of time on issues relating to the  
17 effects of social media?

18 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

19 Don't disclose any conversations with  
20 counsel, but you can otherwise.

21 THE WITNESS: Again, I mean, everything  
22 would be conjecture -- I mean -- conjecture. I  
23 can -- I mean, you start at the bottom, the office  
24 of technology and information. I think it's not  
25 surprising that they're constantly trying to keep

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 53

1 up with the changes going on in all areas of  
2 technology. And -- and one of the challenges we  
3 confront is the degree to which we manage or deal  
4 with specific social media -- like, again, some of  
5 the types of issues we've talked about.

6 So for technology to indicate  
7 20 percent makes a great deal of sense to me,  
8 because, you know, just the idea of how to regulate  
9 what students can access during a school day is --  
10 there's -- there's a lot of work that goes into  
11 that and -- and staying ahead of the students, who  
12 are constantly finding ways around things.

13 And one of the things that we have  
14 tried to restrict access to for a variety of  
15 reasons is various social media platforms. And so  
16 that's -- I mean, from the office of technology,  
17 that's significant.

18 Again, school counseling --

19 BY MR. KEYES:

20 Q. Sir, just let me --

21 A. I know you wanted to go through them.  
22 That's one example --

23 MR. BYRD: That's fair. Hey, we need  
24 to take a quick break.

25 MR. KEYES: Okay. Hold on a second.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 54

1 BY MR. KEYES:

2 Q. You just said at the beginning,  
3 "everything would be conjecture."

4 MR. BYRD: Andy, I'm not going to talk  
5 to the witness about the deposition at all, but we  
6 need to take a quick break, okay?

7 MS. NEAL: It's an emergency.

8 MR. BYRD: Yeah.

9 MR. KEYES: Off the record.

10 (Discussion off the record.)

11 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're now going off  
12 the record. It's 12:18 p.m.

13 \* \* \*

14 (Whereupon, there was a recess in the  
15 proceedings from 12:18 p.m. to 12:25 p.m.)

16 \* \* \*

17 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are now going  
18 back on the record at 12:25 p.m.

19 BY MR. KEYES:

20 Q. Dr. Bulson, we're back on the record.  
21 We took a break for an emergency. That emergency  
22 had nothing to do with the deposition. It involved  
23 students in a school, correct?

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Okay. And if as a result of that

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 55

1 emergency you need to take another break, let us  
2 know.

3 A. Thank you.

4 Q. Okay. Do you have HCPS Exhibit 3 in  
5 front of you?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. In your prior answer, when I was asking  
8 you about what people in a particular department or  
9 program would spend that percentage of time on if  
10 they didn't spend it on issues relating to the  
11 effects of social media, you said, "I mean,  
12 everything would be conjecture."

13 A. Oh, if they didn't spend it. I think I  
14 misunderstood your question.

15 Q. Yes. Yes.

16 So -- so for instructional salaries,  
17 there's a 5 percent weight. 5 percent of their  
18 time, according to this document, people in that  
19 department, is spent on challenges relating to the  
20 effects of social media, correct?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Okay. And I asked you before how they  
23 were spending their time for that 5 percent. And  
24 you said you could give me an educated guess, but  
25 you'd really have to talk to people in that

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 56

1 department.

2 A. Right. So when you say spending that  
3 time addressing the social media concerns --

4 Q. Yeah, the -- the time --

5 A. -- that's the --

6 Q. -- within this --

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. -- weighted percentage.

9 A. So the question I think I -- I think  
10 I --

11 Q. Now it's the flip side, right?

12 A. Understood.

13 Q. I was asking the sister question, which  
14 is: Okay. If they had not spent that 5 percent of  
15 their time on challenges regarding the effects of  
16 social media, do you know how that block of time  
17 would be spent, other than an educated guess?

18 A. Other than an educated guess -- because  
19 it's all conjecture, right?

20 Q. Okay. So to understand how they spend  
21 that percentage of time and how they would have  
22 spent it if it weren't for challenges relating to  
23 the effects of social media, best to talk to people  
24 in those departments?

25 A. Yes. I mean, one example I feel pretty

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 57

1     confident in is, if you look at our safety and  
2     security, because I -- that's not just time.  
3     That's also the number of resources. We've  
4     added -- we've gone from 1 employee in safety and  
5     security to nearly 30.

6                     And so we -- so it's not just time and  
7     effort. There would probably be fewer employees  
8     there if they weren't dealing so frequently with  
9     things related to social media.

10            Q.     So would --

11            A.     But --

12            Q.     So would you defer to --

13                     MR. BYRD: Hold on. Let him finish,  
14     please.

15                     THE WITNESS: Well, no, I -- I was  
16     finished. And -- and I would defer to Mr. Brooks  
17     to be clearer about that.

18     BY MR. KEYES:

19            Q.     Okay. Would you turn to the next  
20     worksheet in this exhibit.

21            A.     Page 3?

22            Q.     Yes.

23                     Did you review this worksheet in any of  
24     your prep sessions with the lawyers?

25            A.     "Review" is a strong word.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 58

1 Q. Did you see it?

2 A. I -- I saw it.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I reviewed the one before, but this one  
5 I really did not spend time on.

6 Q. Okay. So you put eyeballs on it but  
7 didn't spend time sort of reflecting on it. Is  
8 that fair?

9 A. Exactly.

10 Q. Okay. And do you know who prepared  
11 this worksheet?

12 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

13 Again, to the extent you know that from  
14 communications with counsel, then you can't answer.  
15 But otherwise, you can.

16 THE WITNESS: Not a lot to answer  
17 there, then.

18 BY MR. KEYES:

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Have you spoken with anyone besides  
22 Harford County Public Schools' lawyers about the  
23 worksheet titled "Full-Time Equivalent Worksheet"?

24 A. No.

25 Q. You testified earlier today that you

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 59

1 regularly meet with other superintendents in  
2 Maryland?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. There are 24 of you?

5 A. In total, yes, including me.

6 Q. Because there are 24 school districts  
7 in Maryland?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And you said you speak to a few of them  
10 more than the others.

11 A. Closer colleagues, ones I've become  
12 more friendly with.

13 Q. Who are the closer colleagues you speak  
14 with more frequently?

15 A. Superintendent of Cecil County,  
16 Jeff Lawson; superintendent of Anne Arundel  
17 County --

18 THE REPORTER: So --

19 THE WITNESS: Sorry.

20 THE REPORTER: Superintendent of what  
21 county?

22 THE WITNESS: Cecil County, Jeff  
23 Lawson; superintendent of Anne Arundel County,  
24 Mark Bedell; superintendent of Washington County,  
25 David Sovine. These relationships change over

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 60

1 time, the number of people I -- I talk to.

2 BY MR. KEYES:

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Some more than others.

5 Q. Sure.

6 And did you talk to any of the  
7 superintendents you just listed about the idea of  
8 Harford County Public Schools filing this lawsuit?

9 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

10 THE WITNESS: Never in any detail.  
11 The -- the only conversation -- I'm trying to  
12 recall when we were starting this if -- you know, I  
13 was asking who else might be joining in.

14 I don't often -- I mean, I understand  
15 the City of Baltimore is also a plaintiff in this,  
16 but that's not a superintendent I talk to very  
17 often. So I don't recall having a conversation  
18 with her about it. But -- you know, so if -- if I  
19 did, it was very much a conversation in passing,  
20 not in any great depth.

21 (BULSON EXHIBIT 5, Emails dated  
22 2/22/21, Subject: MCAP, Bates HCPS\_00557536-538,  
23 was marked for identification.)

24 BY MR. KEYES:

25 Q. I'm showing you what has been marked as

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 61

1 Bulson Exhibit 5. This was produced to us with the  
2 Bates Numbers HCPS\_00557536 through 557538.

3 MR. BYRD: So just a note: I don't  
4 know if -- you all did receive an email that we had  
5 about clawbacks, I think, last night; is that  
6 right?

7 MR. KEYES: Yes.

8 MR. BYRD: But I don't think this is  
9 one that -- I just want to make sure that y'all --

10 MR. KEYES: Correct.

11 MR. BYRD: -- y'all have that and  
12 saw --

13 MR. KEYES: We have that clawback,  
14 yeah. It doesn't cover this document --

15 MR. BYRD: Gotcha.

16 MR. KEYES: -- or any of the documents  
17 I intend to use today.

18 MR. BYRD: Got it. Okay.

19 MR. KEYES: If -- if we're mistaken,  
20 please let us know.

21 MR. BYRD: Yeah, I'm just making sure  
22 we're on the same page.

23 MR. KEYES: Sure.

24 THE WITNESS: Okay.

25 BY MR. KEYES:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 62

1 Q. Have you read the emails?

2 A. I haven't finished, but I'm pretty sure  
3 I would have at the time.

4 Q. Well, the email on the first page --

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. -- the latest in time in this string is  
7 from you to Phillip Snyder, copying Susan Brown, on  
8 February 22nd, 2021. Do you see that?

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 Q. Is that a "yes"?

11 A. Yes. Sorry.

12 Q. And do you remember this email?

13 A. No.

14 Q. What is MCAP?

15 A. That's the Maryland state assessment.

16 Q. And do you see that there were other  
17 superintendents from other districts that were  
18 going to address concerns about MCAP with the  
19 Maryland State Department of Education?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Did you share those concerns?

22 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

23 THE WITNESS: Again, I'm trying to  
24 recall what specifically we were raising concerns  
25 about at the time. So this is 2021. It could have

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 63

1     been a wide range of things. Those two  
2     superintendents are now retired.

3     BY MR. KEYES:

4             Q.     Which -- which superintendents are you  
5     referring to?

6             A.     Griffith and Smith, the two in the  
7     first email.

8             Q.     Do you know Kelly Griffith from  
9     Talbot County?

10            A.     I do.

11            Q.     Was she one of your closer colleagues  
12     when she was a superintendent?

13            A.     You could say that. I think at the  
14     time she was the president of our organization,  
15     such as -- by virtue of the fact that she led most  
16     of our meetings, I would have had more interaction  
17     with her.

18            Q.     And what organization are you referring  
19     to?

20            A.     Public School Superintendents'  
21     Association of Maryland. PSSAM is the acronym  
22     here.

23            Q.     Do you know Jack Smith from MCPS?

24            A.     Yes.

25            Q.     What is MCPS?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 64

1 A. Montgomery County Public Schools.

2 Q. Was -- was he one of your closer  
3 colleagues when --

4 A. Prior --

5 Q. -- he was a superintendent?

6 A. Prior to his retirement, he would have  
7 been. We were close. This might be the year he  
8 retired.

9 Q. You believe that Mr. Smith retired?

10 A. He did retire.

11 Q. Okay. And did Ms. Griffith retire?

12 A. She did.

13 Q. What were your impressions of  
14 Ms. Griffith in terms of honesty, competency,  
15 expertise?

16 A. I had no reason to challenge any of  
17 those with her.

18 Q. What were your impressions of Mr. Smith  
19 in terms of honesty, competency and expertise?

20 A. The same. They were two of the most  
21 experienced superintendents in the state.  
22 Mr. Smith was someone who many of my colleagues  
23 deferred to as an expert and someone to pay  
24 attention to.

25 Q. Did you get a report back from

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 65

1 Ms. Griffith or Mr. Smith on how this meeting went  
2 with the Maryland State Department of Education?

3 A. Well, they -- they testified in person  
4 is what this appears to be speaking to.

5 Q. Did you attend that meeting?

6 A. I didn't attend the state board  
7 meeting.

8 Q. So did you get a report --

9 A. I -- I --

10 Q. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

11 A. -- at times watch them, the recording.  
12 I either could have watched it or watched the  
13 recording of it. I don't recall if I watched this  
14 one or not. I mean, it's pretty -- I mean, nearly  
15 every month we have superintendents bringing  
16 comments to the state board. I've done it myself.

17 So this is the case where they were  
18 doing it. It appears to be connected to the  
19 release of the state testing data and -- you know,  
20 again, I haven't kind of read the whole thing to  
21 see what the details are and why we were so keyed  
22 in on this, but there's always things changing  
23 around that. So that's -- so I can -- I'll wait --

24 Q. So --

25 A. -- and see where your questions are

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 66

1 going.

2 Q. Yeah.

3 So did you get a report back from  
4 Ms. Griffith or Mr. Smith on how this meeting went  
5 with the Maryland State Department of Education?  
6 You said they attended and testified --

7 A. I don't know what you mean by  
8 "report back." The degree that I didn't -- you  
9 know, I would have seen it, our executive director  
10 would have shared feedback about it.

11 I was in the executive committee at the  
12 time, so we might have discussed how it went in --  
13 in the -- in PSSAM's executive committee meetings.  
14 We also probably would have discussed how it went  
15 at our next full meeting of the 24 superintendents.

16 But in terms of there being a report  
17 back, I'm -- I don't -- I -- I would suspect there  
18 wasn't a specific report in that regard.

19 Q. Do you understand from the email from  
20 Phillip Snyder at the top of the second page that  
21 there were concerns regarding the implementation of  
22 MCAP assessments --

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. -- in the spring of 2021?

25 A. Yeah. Sorry. It's taking me a second

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 67

1 to kind of put myself back into what we were  
2 dealing with in the timing. So, yes.

3 Q. Were these concerns related to the  
4 impacts of COVID, the shutdown of in-person  
5 learning and the focus on virtual learning?

6 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

7 THE WITNESS: The answer to the  
8 question is in part, because compounding the impact  
9 that the pandemic and the changes we were going  
10 through was also the fact that the state testing  
11 program and format were also being modified at the  
12 time.

13 I don't know how much of the detail you  
14 want, but the fact is -- so some of the concerns  
15 arose from the pandemic. Other concerns arose from  
16 the fact that the state was in the process of  
17 changing tests from PARCC to MCAP. MCAP had not  
18 been administered yet. It was due to be piloted.

19 I can't recall whether it was due to be  
20 piloted in '20 or '21. But the point is, testing  
21 was interrupted in '20. So the ability to pilot  
22 items and things like that -- so we had concerns  
23 about what the state board was presenting,  
24 basically saying that the fact that these students  
25 took these tests when the items that were used on

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 68

1 it hadn't had a chance to be -- I mean, there's a  
2 lot of other things that were going on in addition  
3 to the pandemic here.

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. Okay. And this list of concerns is in  
6 Phil Snyder's email?

7 A. Yeah. Yeah, he --

8 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

9 Go ahead.

10 THE WITNESS: Yes, but he -- yeah.

11 According to what's on here, he delineated what he  
12 viewed as concerns and what he might consider  
13 including in a letter that we sent separately.

14 So --

15 BY MR. KEYES:

16 Q. Right.

17 A. -- it appears as though Dr. Griffith  
18 and Dr. Smith were intending to share similar  
19 things.

20 Q. And so --

21 A. Mr. Snyder was delineating, like, how  
22 he would organize thinking from Harford County.

23 Q. And according to your email, you then  
24 forwarded Mr. Snyder's articulated concerns to  
25 Kelly Griffith and Jack Smith for them to consider

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 69

1 in advance of testifying at this meeting?

2 A. This is what I sent to Phil -- I'm not  
3 seeing how that follows, but it wouldn't --

4 Q. Yeah. You said --

5 A. -- be surprising if I had. Where am I  
6 here?

7 Q. Yeah. Let -- let's make sure you're at  
8 the top of the first page.

9 A. Uh-huh. So that, too, is to Phil.

10 Q. Right.

11 Hi, Phil. I just spoke to Kelly  
12 Griffith from Talbot County. She and Jack Smith  
13 will be testifying on behalf of PSSAM tomorrow.  
14 She indicated many districts had sent their own  
15 letters, so feel free to submit what you have  
16 proposed. I also forwarded what you prepared for  
17 Drs. Smith and Griffith to see --

18 A. Oh, yeah.

19 Q. -- in case there were any ideas they  
20 hadn't considered.

21 Do you see that?

22 A. Yes, finally. Okay.

23 Q. So Mr. Snyder has listed these  
24 concerns, sent them to you. You then tell  
25 Mr. Snyder, I forwarded what you prepared to

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 70

1 Drs. Smith and Griffith to see if you had ideas  
2 they hadn't considered that they might incorporate  
3 into --

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. -- their testimony?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Is that fair?

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. Is that a "yes"?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. Mr. Snyder lists the concerns on  
12 the second page of this exhibit.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Numbers 1 through 10?

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. Are you on that page?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. The second concern he lists is titled  
19 "Mental Health." He says: Many of our students  
20 have not been in the buildings for a length of  
21 time. We know that state assessments can be  
22 stressful for both teachers and students. With our  
23 transition back to in-person learning, the focus  
24 should be on meeting students' instructional needs  
25 as well as support their mental health concerns.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 71

1 Did I read that correctly?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. This was one of the concerns about the  
4 testing approach at this point in dealing with the  
5 pandemic, correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And what were the students' mental  
8 health concerns, from your perspective?

9 A. I mean, we had been dealing with sort  
10 of growing -- I mean, concerns about students' sort  
11 of sense of efficacy. I think at the time there  
12 were still concerns about even being in school  
13 because there was fear that would have -- you know,  
14 because this is a time frame when we still had many  
15 families who didn't believe it was safe to be in  
16 person in school. So that would be part of this.

17 I mean, testing in general is  
18 anxiety-inducing, and we -- and I think that's  
19 something that we've seen in some cases grow.  
20 Other students have taken a different approach and  
21 move more toward apathy.

22 I'm sure with a little more time I  
23 could reflect on this further. But there was a  
24 whole range of mental health concerns that we were  
25 confronting in those days. And the fact that,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 72

1 again, this was a new assessment they hadn't seen,  
2 that, you know, doing things in person, at least  
3 according to this date, was still relatively new.  
4 And February of 2021 was the kind of place where we  
5 were just getting back to being in person. So  
6 there's -- there's a lot that could contribute to  
7 that.

8 Q. Are -- do you have any data regarding  
9 Harford County Public Schools' students' use of  
10 cell phones and other electronic devices?

11 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

12 You can answer.

13 THE WITNESS: Data? Maybe I'm being  
14 too literal on that front. Take -- take, for  
15 example, this year, we greatly restricted access to  
16 cell phones in schools.

17 This year's data following that, we're  
18 on target to see significant -- now, we're not at  
19 the end of the year. We're comparing end-of-year  
20 data to March data. But we're on target to see  
21 between 30 and 50 percent decreases in fights,  
22 assaults on students, you know, other disruptions.

23 We recently presented those data to the  
24 Board of Education. And we believe it's -- it's a  
25 mixture of a number of things we've done.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 73

1           But I think -- you know, we can't draw  
2   a clear straight line. But I do believe a big part  
3   of what we're seeing in improvements in those other  
4   behaviors are attributable, to some degree, to the  
5   fact that our students have had less access to  
6   their phones during the day. It's specific to  
7   their phone. They still have their school-supplied  
8   devices. But what we've -- the benefits we've seen  
9   from taking the phones out of their hands have been  
10  striking in terms of improvements.

11           And so when you speak to data -- you  
12  know, I can't tell you exactly how many students  
13  have a phone. I mean, we're pretty confident that  
14  the answer is really close to 100 percent, but I  
15  don't know exactly where that lands.

16           You know, again, anecdotally, you know,  
17  I've had principals independently say to me, you  
18  know, not having the phones has been amazing. They  
19  can't schedule the fights. They can't -- you know,  
20  the -- the disruptions that occur -- and I'll go  
21  back to the -- sort of the daily life of a school  
22  administrator.

23           You know, I was a school administrator  
24  outside the window of this case. But the number of  
25  times I was dealing with personal conflicts between

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 74

1 students -- you know, I was a principal from 2004  
2 to 2008. I was assistant principal from, I guess,  
3 about 2000-2004. You know, so then it was more  
4 Facebook, because that was a more prominent social  
5 media platform students were using. The number of  
6 conflicts I was dealing with in school that started  
7 out of school on a social media platform was -- I  
8 was dealing with something daily trying to sort out  
9 those conflicts.

10 I don't know as intimately the  
11 day-to-day of our school-based administrators now,  
12 but they're frequently dealing with conflicts that  
13 are happening on social media. And during the day,  
14 those are getting elevated. And what I've  
15 experienced listening to them talk about this one  
16 year's data is that there's been far less of that.

17 You know, they indicate that there are  
18 still concerns going on outside of school. But  
19 because the students don't have access to their  
20 phones or as much access -- and they're working. I  
21 mean, this is one of the things our technology  
22 department is spending time on, is they're trying  
23 to find ways to interact with each other through,  
24 you know, platforms that they can kind of work  
25 around on our school-provided devices.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 75

1           So, again, that's our technology  
2     department trying to stay ahead of them so they're  
3     not circumventing, you know, the technology that  
4     we're trying to keep them off of during the day  
5     that's contributing to these conflicts between  
6     students.

7           And so we do have data -- it was  
8     provided in -- gosh, within the last month to our  
9     board -- about reductions in a variety of -- well,  
10    we've talked about chronic absenteeism, but the  
11    other behaviors, fights, attacks. So that, we do  
12    have more recently.

13           And so, again, the improvement has been  
14    pretty amazing how quickly it turned around after  
15    taking devices out of the kids' hands.

16   BY MR. KEYES:

17           Q.     And when you --

18                   MR. BYRD:   Sorry.   Quick break.

19                   MR. KEYES:   Okay.   Off the record.

20                   THE VIDEOGRAPHER:   We're now going off  
21   the record at 12:49 p.m.

22                               \* \* \*

23                   (Whereupon, there was a luncheon recess  
24   in the proceedings from 12:49 p.m. to 1:35 p.m.)

25                               \* \* \*

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 76

1 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are now going  
2 back on the record at 1:35 p.m.

3 BY MR. KEYES:

4 Q. Dr. Bulson, prior to the break, you  
5 were discussing the impact of a policy greatly  
6 restricting students' access to cell phones during  
7 the day.

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. Is that a policy that the Board of  
10 Education adopted?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Is that a policy that went into effect  
13 in January of 2025?

14 A. No. August of '24.

15 Q. So that policy went into effect for  
16 this school year?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Is that a policy that was mandated by  
19 the state?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Is that a policy that Harford County  
22 Public Schools developed on its own?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Did you support adopting that policy?

25 A. Yes.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 77

1 Q. Did you participate in the drafting of  
2 the policy?

3 A. A little bit. Not greatly.

4 Q. What was your role in the drafting of  
5 the policy?

6 A. Again, the policy actually was mostly  
7 drafted, if I recall this one, by our board  
8 president. But all drafting of policies normally  
9 goes through our policy review committee, which is  
10 a combination of school system administrators, our  
11 attorneys and board members.

12 So the drafting would have happened  
13 there. So I -- I would have given anecdotal  
14 feedback along the way, but I wasn't sitting and  
15 writing.

16 Q. Did you advocate for adoption of that  
17 policy by the Board of Education?

18 A. I supported it. Actually, the -- the  
19 movement toward that policy originated with the  
20 board.

21 Q. And you mentioned that the board  
22 president did most of the drafting. What is the  
23 board president's name?

24 A. Aaron Poynton.

25 Q. And can you explain to me how the

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 78

1 policy originated with the Board of Education?

2 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

3 You can answer.

4 THE WITNESS: How it originated. I  
5 think it emerged sort of organically. I mean,  
6 throughout the year, we -- we've been talking about  
7 concerns with student behavior. One thing -- the  
8 board does listening sessions almost monthly where  
9 they hold open forum for -- for people to come  
10 and -- and speak with them.

11 And I think, you know, some of the  
12 input they receive during the listening sessions  
13 would be about concerns with enforcing cell phone  
14 policies in the schools and the range of -- of  
15 challenges with students having access to the  
16 phones and what's on them and the distraction they  
17 provided, as well as some of the other things I've  
18 given examples about.

19 So through the context of their  
20 listening sessions, through, you know, them gaining  
21 understanding of the -- the discipline challenges  
22 that we've continued to confront, this was an idea.  
23 Like I said, I believe this was an idea that  
24 emerged primarily with Dr. Poynton, even though,  
25 again, it was based on feedback coming to him from

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 79

1 community and other places.

2 And then so he and I talked regularly.  
3 It was a conversation. I shared some of the  
4 challenges with -- I actually had some concerns,  
5 because having been an administrator, I know how  
6 hard it is to prohibit things with students.

7 So I was actually the devil's advocate  
8 through most of it. But in the end, I supported  
9 the form in which it came out, and we've enforced  
10 it to the best of our ability. And, again, we've  
11 seen positive results.

12 BY MR. KEYES:

13 Q. What does the current policy provide  
14 regarding middle school students' access to or use  
15 of cell phones or personal electronic devices at  
16 school?

17 A. So middle school students' phones or  
18 any personal devices are required to be in their  
19 lockers during the school day and off. But they  
20 still have access to their school-issued  
21 Chromebooks.

22 Q. And what does the current policy  
23 provide regarding high school students' access to  
24 or use of cell phones or personal electronic  
25 devices at school?

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 80

1           A.    As of today, the policy reads that the  
2   students can have them on their person. They're  
3   supposed to be off and out of sight. But, again,  
4   they still have access to their school-provided  
5   devices, which in some cases are Chromebooks; in  
6   other cases, laptops.

7                   But there's actually a policy out for  
8   public comment right now changing the high school  
9   policy to be consistent with the middle school  
10   students. In other words, they'll have to be in  
11   the lockers.

12           Q.   And could not be on the student's  
13   person?

14           A.   Correct.

15           Q.   And when middle school students are not  
16   permitted to have possession of their cell phones  
17   during the school day because the cell phone has to  
18   be in their locker, are they allowed to take it out  
19   at lunch and use it?

20           A.   No.

21           Q.   Are they allowed to take it out in  
22   between classes and use it?

23           A.   Middle school, no.

24           Q.   Okay. Are high school students allowed  
25   to use their cell phones during lunch?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 81

1           A.     There's some variance. I believe the  
2 policy reads that, yes. Different schools have  
3 chosen to enforce it differently. And so some  
4 schools allow more access at lunch; others, less  
5 so.

6           Q.     So it varies by school based on the  
7 discretion of the principal?

8           A.     Yeah, to a certain degree.

9           Q.     Are high school students allowed to use  
10 their cell phones in between classes in the  
11 hallway?

12          A.     They're allowed to. Our current  
13 proposal would eliminate that so that they don't --  
14 they'd have to be in the locker also.

15          Q.     Because the -- the proposal is to make  
16 Harford County Public Schools' high school students  
17 subject to the same rules as the middle school  
18 students?

19          A.     Yes.

20          Q.     Did you advocate for any changes to the  
21 current policy that were not adopted?

22          A.     No.

23          Q.     Have you advocated for changes to the  
24 current policy?

25                 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 82

1 THE WITNESS: We're -- again, we're  
2 still talking about current. I mean, the policy --  
3 the one that went in place in August?

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. Again, even the advocacy for the  
7 changes that are out for discussion right now, that  
8 really initiated with the board. I support their  
9 decision, but -- so if you're looking at me as the  
10 advocate of the source of that, that wasn't me.  
11 But, again, I support the board's position on this.

12 Q. Okay. So you -- you support the  
13 Board of Education's adoption of the current policy  
14 that's been in effect since --

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. -- August of 2024 --

17 A. Uh-huh.

18 Q. -- yes?

19 A. Yes. Sorry.

20 Q. You -- you played devil's advocate to  
21 sort of test the merits of that policy before it  
22 was adopted, but you support the board's adoption  
23 of it, yes?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You understand that there is a new

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 83

1 policy being considered --

2 A. Uh-huh. Yes.

3 Q. -- for high school students. That's  
4 not something you're driving?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. But it's -- and as you understand, it's  
7 being driven by -- by board members?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. But you support the board's pushing and  
10 consideration of this new policy?

11 A. Again --

12 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

13 You can answer.

14 THE WITNESS: Yeah, but these are the  
15 things I work closely with the board on. You know,  
16 they continue to get feedback. And so, yeah, I --  
17 I support where they're going with this.

18 This is always a difficult topic  
19 because, again, my original concerns about it  
20 reflect back to when I was administrator and the  
21 huge distraction it is to -- the -- the challenge  
22 with -- with implementing or enforcing cell phone  
23 policies, because our students are so closely  
24 connected to those devices that I think at times  
25 they may not even realize when they're pulling them

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 84

1 out and looking at them because they're so  
2 connected to them.

3 And so I've -- I've had concern --  
4 because, you know, trying to take a phone from a  
5 student who is noncomplying, essentially that cuts  
6 into instructional time. A teacher has to decide  
7 every minute they're in the building whether  
8 they're going to take a minute to address a student  
9 about cell phones or whether they're going to spend  
10 that minute teaching.

11 And so there's a -- you know, there's  
12 an increasing challenge, and we just have  
13 different -- different ideas about how best to deal  
14 with the -- our students' addiction and connection  
15 to their devices.

16 BY MR. KEYES:

17 Q. Before the Board of Education adopted  
18 the current policy that went into effect in  
19 August of 2024 --

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. -- was there some other policy that you  
22 were advocating for regarding student access to or  
23 use of cell phones or personal electronic devices  
24 at the school?

25 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 85

1 THE WITNESS: Something else we were  
2 advocating for?

3 BY MR. KEYES:

4 Q. Well, not "we." You, personally.

5 A. Yeah -- me, personally?

6 Q. Yeah.

7 A. Not specific to this. Not at the time,  
8 no.

9 Q. Okay. So there was the prior policy,  
10 and now there's the current policy. There's no  
11 third draft policy that you were advocating for,  
12 correct?

13 A. Correct.

14 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

15 BY MR. KEYES:

16 Q. Do you have any quantitative data on  
17 how frequently Harford County Public School  
18 students use their cell phones at school?

19 A. Use them?

20 MR. BYRD: Object -- sorry.

21 BY MR. KEYES:

22 Q. Yes.

23 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

24 THE WITNESS: No.

25 MR. BYRD: You can answer.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 86

1 THE WITNESS: Sorry. No, I don't have  
2 specific data on how often they use them.

3 BY MR. KEYES:

4 Q. Do you have any quantitative data on  
5 how much time Harford County Public School students  
6 use their cell phones at school?

7 A. I don't have quantitative data on that,  
8 no.

9 Q. Do you have quantitative data on how  
10 frequently Harford County Public School students  
11 use social media at school?

12 A. Again, I -- I don't have a way of  
13 measuring that.

14 Q. Do you have any quantitative data on  
15 how much time Harford County Public School students  
16 use their cell phones at school -- I'm sorry.  
17 Strike that.

18 Do you have any quantitative data on  
19 how much time Harford County Public School students  
20 use social media at school?

21 A. How is that -- no. I think -- I  
22 thought that was the question I just answered.  
23 But, okay. No. Did I -- if I misunderstood.

24 Q. No. Well, I asked two questions about  
25 cell phones. Now I'm asking about social media.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 87

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. The first question was: Do you have  
3 any quantitative data about how frequently they use  
4 social media?

5 A. Or how much time?

6 Q. And this one is how much time they  
7 spend --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- on social media.

10 A. No quantitative on either.

11 Q. Do you have any quantitative data on  
12 either how frequently students use the defendants'  
13 platforms or how much time they spend using  
14 defendants' platforms at school?

15 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

16 THE WITNESS: Again, not quantitative  
17 data.

18 BY MR. KEYES:

19 Q. Okay. What you have may be  
20 qualitative, anecdotal, observational?

21 A. Of course. And, again, I personally  
22 have some that would be shared with me. But it's  
23 also anecdotal from talking to principals, talking  
24 to teachers, you know, the degree to which I do  
25 that. But I'm sure I don't have a full picture.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 88

1 Q. Have you given any presentation to any  
2 audience regarding Harford County Public School  
3 students' use of social media?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Have you given any presentation to any  
6 audience regarding Harford County Public School  
7 students' use of the defendants' platforms?

8 A. I have not.

9 Q. Have you given any presentation to any  
10 audience regarding Harford County Public School  
11 students' use of cell phones or personal electronic  
12 devices?

13 A. I have not.

14 Q. Have you attended any presentation  
15 on --

16 A. Specific to Harford County?

17 Q. Yes, on Harford County Public School  
18 students' use of social media, use of the  
19 defendants' platforms or use of cell phones or  
20 personal electronic devices?

21 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

22 THE WITNESS: To my recollection, not  
23 specific to Harford County.

24 BY MR. KEYES:

25 Q. Okay. Have you attended any

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 89

1 presentation about teenagers' use of cell phones or  
2 personal electronic devices, use of social media or  
3 use of defendants' platforms that's not specific to  
4 Harford County Public School students?

5 A. Understood. Probably the cases  
6 where -- the situations where I would encounter  
7 discussions of use of social media has more to do  
8 with legal updates.

9 And I'm not talking specific to my  
10 attorney but, you know, through association  
11 meetings where attorneys will come in and talk  
12 about various cases and often talk about the role  
13 that social media plays in those cases or might  
14 have been mentioned in those cases. And, you know,  
15 for example, you know, nationwide cases that are  
16 precedent-setting or something like that.

17 So between the Maryland Association of  
18 Boards of Education conference where we meet each  
19 year with all of our in-house attorneys -- or many  
20 of the attorneys that our school systems use, they  
21 make presentations on various cases and -- you  
22 know. So I'd hear it there.

23 I attend the Association of School  
24 Administrators conferences where they often provide  
25 legal updates on various cases that are happening

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 90

1 around the country. And, again, in -- in many of  
2 those cases, you know, social media is -- is  
3 somewhere a part of it.

4 Q. In those presentations that you've just  
5 described where social media comes up, it's in the  
6 context of particular cases?

7 A. Generally, yes.

8 Q. Okay. Have you attended any  
9 presentations about quantitative data or statistics  
10 about teenagers' use of cell phones or personal  
11 electronic devices, use of social media or use of  
12 the defendants' platforms?

13 A. I'm --

14 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

15 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I guess I'm not  
16 entirely sure I can answer that. I mean, I'm  
17 thinking through presentations where I've heard it,  
18 but I don't know that they were ever specific to  
19 that topic. But it's not uncommon to be mentioned.

20 You know, for example, if I attend a  
21 presentation on student mental health, it's always  
22 referenced. But I don't know that we're talking  
23 quantitative data or anything like that. I just --  
24 those are the situations where the topic is always  
25 touched upon.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 91

1 BY MR. KEYES:

2 Q. How often are you in the classroom?

3 A. I'm in a classroom at least weekly,  
4 sometimes multiple times a week. I visit schools,  
5 55 schools. I have visited at least four times a  
6 year with each of my principals. Many of those  
7 visits I go to the school and walk through classes.  
8 So it's not an uncommon thing for me to -- to be in  
9 classrooms.

10 Q. Have you spoken with any teacher  
11 regarding the amount of time he or she spends in  
12 the classroom on issues related to social media?

13 A. Not specific just to that. I mean,  
14 again, when they share the stories of things that  
15 they're -- they are concerned with, it's always --  
16 it's often something that is part of the  
17 conversation, but we don't usually speak  
18 specifically about social media.

19 Q. Have you spoken with any teacher  
20 regarding the amount of time he or she spends in  
21 the classroom on issues related to cell phone use  
22 by students?

23 A. Oh, I've certainly had, again,  
24 incidental conversations with people about that,  
25 particularly, you know, as we've talked about,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 92

1 enforcement of cell phones and that sort of thing,  
2 because --

3 You know, the -- I mean, the challenge  
4 we see with schools is -- you know, I -- I try to  
5 get a sense from them -- it's like, you know,  
6 what's -- what do you see as the best way to  
7 approach dealing with cell phones?

8 And in my experience, their answer is  
9 split down the middle. Half would rather tell the  
10 kid to put something away. The other half is going  
11 to try to intervene and -- and take something --

12 So it's -- it's a constant discussion,  
13 and there's not a lot of agreement about how to  
14 address them. But I've certainly talked to --  
15 talked to teachers about that particular topic,  
16 about how to enforce, because I know it's a  
17 challenge.

18 Q. I'm not sure I followed your answer  
19 where you said, when you talk to teachers, their  
20 answer is split down the middle. You say half the  
21 teachers would intervene with a student who is  
22 using a cell phone in violation of the policy by  
23 taking something away --

24 A. The --

25 Q. -- the phone --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 93

1           A.     If the policy says that -- let me put  
2     it this way: Half of your teachers are going to  
3     move on and keep teaching. They may say something  
4     to a student; they may not. But they're going to  
5     focus on the teaching.

6                 Others are going to go out of the way.  
7     They're going to stop their teaching, and they're  
8     going to, you know, interrupt their teaching and  
9     take the time to address the violation.

10                And then there's the whole range of  
11    behaviors in between. One might say, "Just put it  
12    away." Others might say, "Give me the phone."

13                I mean -- I mean -- so, again, there's  
14    a whole range, but there isn't agreement in terms  
15    of practice in how teachers respond. Some are very  
16    strict. Some are less so.

17           Q.     So have you had a conversation with any  
18    teacher where they've quantified the amount of  
19    time, the percentage of time they spend dealing  
20    with students using cell phones or personal  
21    electronic devices in violation of policy?

22           A.     Not that explicitly, no.

23           Q.     Have you spoken with any principal or  
24    assistant principal about the amount of time they  
25    spend on issues related to social media?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 94

1           A.     Again, not that explicitly. To some  
2     degree, I'm drawing on my own experience from when  
3     I was a principal. But, you know, that's changed,  
4     and I think it's actually gotten worse since then.

5           Q.     Have you spoken with any principal or  
6     assistant principal about the amount of time they  
7     spend on students' use of cell phones or personal  
8     electronic devices?

9           A.     Again, explicit conversations just on  
10    that topic, no. I mean, when we talk about  
11    discipline challenges, it always comes up. When we  
12    talk about students' ability to focus in classroom,  
13    it always comes up.

14                But I've -- we've never talked about a  
15    specific amount of time or frequency or things like  
16    that. Just knowing that it's a -- it's something  
17    that's constantly present in our classrooms and,  
18    you know, a challenge that the teachers every day  
19    struggle with how to address.

20           Q.     I asked you about conversations with  
21    principals or assistant principals.

22           A.     Principals. Sorry. Or assistant  
23    principals. Again, I've talked to -- I mean,  
24    generally, if I'm talking to them, it's more about  
25    the discipline that -- that they're confronting

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 95

1 every day. And it's not uncommon for things to  
2 start with something that -- again, a lot of the  
3 disputes we see in schools which -- and at times,  
4 these disputes end up in the administrator's  
5 purview.

6 Q. Okay. But -- but I asked you about  
7 principals and assistant principals.

8 Now I'm asking about any other  
9 administrators in Harford County Public Schools.  
10 Have you spoken with any of them about the amount  
11 of time they spend on student use of social media?

12 A. Specific time, no.

13 Q. Okay. And other than principals and  
14 assistant principals, have you spoken with any  
15 other administrators of Harford County Public  
16 Schools about the amount of time they spend on  
17 student use of cell phones or personal electronic  
18 devices?

19 A. Again, not -- not about the specific  
20 amount of time. Just, you know, over on our  
21 student services side, when we're talking about  
22 mental health, again, it's always part of the  
23 conversation, so people like Mr. Hennigan and those  
24 who report to him on the mental health side. So  
25 the administrators on his team are people that I

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 96

1 would have conversations related to this topic but  
2 not specifically in the way you asked.

3 Q. Are you familiar with the Youth Risk  
4 Behavior Survey?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What is it?

7 A. It's a survey given every other year.  
8 I can't remember the last time we reviewed it.  
9 It's something we've used in the past. I think  
10 we've -- to my understanding, we've kind of focused  
11 on it less because we've done our own student  
12 wellness survey.

13 And you've asked about quantitative  
14 data, and I realized I was not thinking of either  
15 of those. But the degree to which we have  
16 quantitative data about it, it would be in either  
17 the Youth Risk Behavior Survey or our -- the  
18 student wellness survey, which we did in the last  
19 couple of years. That would be something I'd ask  
20 Mr. Hennigan about because that all rests with him.

21 Q. When the Youth Risk Behavior Survey  
22 results are released, do you review them?

23 A. Not necessarily, unless Mr. Hennigan  
24 brings something to my attention. In the -- in the  
25 past, he has done presentations related to elements

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 97

1 from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. And when we  
2 chose to design our own wellness survey, some of  
3 the thinking there was modeled on the Youth Risk  
4 Behavior Survey.

5 Q. So you have had experiences where  
6 Mr. Hennigan has presented data to you based on the  
7 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results?

8 A. Yeah. I mean, to be fair, he presents  
9 it to senior staff, which I attend, and then  
10 usually that's in preparation for presentation to  
11 the board.

12 I can't remember the last time we  
13 presented on the YRBS in our last -- I know we have  
14 an updated version of the mental health data. We  
15 have a dashboard for our mental health data. But I  
16 don't recall what's in there specific to social  
17 media or cell phone use.

18 Q. Have you made any specific decision  
19 based on data presented to you from the Youth Risk  
20 Behavior Survey?

21 A. Specifically drawn to that? Again, I  
22 mean, the things I've tended to focus on there,  
23 we've looked at other settings related to health  
24 and wellness for a while -- a group that's no  
25 longer in operation. But we had a Harford County

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 98

1 sort of health gathering of leaders, hospital,  
2 social services, health department -- and so we've  
3 gone through the context there.

4 But in terms of specific  
5 decision-making, I mean, that was the source of our  
6 significant concerns I talked about in 2018 and '19  
7 where we made a decision to focus on mental health.  
8 Well, I say "we." The student advisory chose that  
9 as their initiative, and their work kicked off a  
10 great deal more work related to mental health.

11 But, again, I -- there's so much that  
12 Mr. Hennigan and his team do around mental health  
13 that I -- I kind of would refer -- I know you've  
14 already spoken with him, but he really is the  
15 expert on the details related to this.

16 Q. You mentioned that Harford County  
17 Public Schools has conducted its own wellness  
18 survey.

19 A. Uh-huh.

20 Q. Is that the Wellness Needs Assessment?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. For how many years has Harford County  
23 Public Schools been conducting that assessment?

24 A. I'm pretty sure it's now three. We  
25 developed it. We've modified it. But I think

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 99

1 we've given the third version of it in this last  
2 year.

3 Q. So each of the last three years? Two  
4 prior years --

5 A. I --

6 Q. -- and the current year?

7 A. I believe so.

8 Q. Who conducts the Wellness Needs  
9 Assessment?

10 A. The students take it. The students  
11 support services, so Mr. Hennigan's office, drives  
12 it. And it's -- it's something that they do in  
13 class across the school system. We get a pretty  
14 high response rate.

15 Q. Who decides what questions will be  
16 asked in that Wellness Needs Assessment?

17 A. We have a couple of groups that do work  
18 in that area. For example, we have a mental  
19 health -- I think the title is "mental health  
20 coordinator," Christina Alton, who works for  
21 Mr. Hennigan.

22 And so whether it comes out of  
23 Mr. Hennigan's student support services' staff  
24 meetings -- but I also believe there's an advisory  
25 that does work around this. So they would be

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 100

1 coming together, seeking strategies to employ to  
2 help address student mental health needs or  
3 wellness needs in general.

4 They also -- the Blueprint for  
5 Maryland's Future was a big educational initiative  
6 we worked through. One of the pillars in that is  
7 about -- has a lot to do with student services and  
8 the services they get outside of the classroom.

9 And that's an active group with a  
10 number of stakeholders from around the county,  
11 including health department and places like that.  
12 And so they're constantly working, coming up with  
13 strategies of things to do to address the overall  
14 wellness needs.

15 So there's a degree to which they spend  
16 on this. Since I don't attend those meetings, I  
17 get the high-level summaries of their work, but we  
18 have a lot of groups working in this realm or close  
19 to it.

20 Q. Who is the final decision-maker about  
21 what questions will be asked in that Wellness Needs  
22 Assessment?

23 A. I would argue Mr. Hennigan would be the  
24 one signing off on what's fully in there. He  
25 would -- he would talk to me about it, but

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 101

1 decision-making is really sitting at his level.

2 Q. In the Wellness Needs Assessment that  
3 was conducted two school years ago, that is, the  
4 first Wellness Needs Assessment, were there any  
5 questions about social media?

6 A. I don't remember. I don't remember.

7 Q. Okay. In the Wellness Needs Assessment  
8 that was conducted the prior school year, was there  
9 any questions about social media?

10 A. I don't remember. I mean, I believe  
11 we've had those, I know, because we've had to add  
12 social media to our bullying report, for example,  
13 and things like that. And I believe that would be  
14 the place it would have come from. But I honestly  
15 don't remember. You'd have to talk to him.

16 Q. Are there questions about social media  
17 in this school year's Wellness Needs Assessment?

18 A. Again, I don't remember.

19 Q. Who compiles the survey data for the  
20 Wellness Needs Assessment?

21 A. The compiling of the data, I mean, we  
22 do it through a platform. I believe the person  
23 who, for example, builds the dashboard that we  
24 create around this is our manager of program  
25 evaluation, who is Yakoubou Ousmanou. So he's the

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 102

1 person who would have built the dashboard. So if  
2 you're talking about compiling the data, most  
3 likely it's flowing through him.

4 But, again, Mr. Hennigan and his team  
5 would have a big part of it. And anyone who is  
6 sort of looking at results, that sort of thing  
7 would be in Mr. Hennigan's team. So he'd be  
8 working with Mr. Ousmanou to do that.

9 Q. For the Wellness Needs Assessment two  
10 years ago, in the first year, was a final report  
11 prepared to summarize what was learned from that  
12 assessment?

13 A. To my recollection, yes. I believe  
14 it's posted on our website.

15 Q. And is that the only report, or are  
16 there different versions where one is public and  
17 one isn't public?

18 A. I can't recall specifically what's  
19 public right now. We have a dashboard that  
20 internally we look at. I don't know if we've  
21 updated a report that actually was made public to  
22 the board. A little bit would have to do if the  
23 board had an interest in seeing it again, but I  
24 don't recall.

25 Q. Okay. The same question for the

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 103

1 Wellness Needs Assessment last year. Was a final  
2 report prepared to summarize what was learned in  
3 that assessment?

4 A. I don't recall. I mean -- I -- I --  
5 for a different reason, I was looking at the  
6 reports that we've done through the -- the program  
7 evaluation team, and I -- I vaguely remember at  
8 least two different wellness reports being posted  
9 there. But I can't tell you was it this year's or  
10 last year's or what time. I -- I recall having two  
11 of them out and floating around.

12 Q. Okay. Well, my -- my -- you  
13 anticipated my next question, which is: Is there  
14 a -- is there a report of the results from this  
15 year's Wellness Needs Assessment?

16 A. I don't recall what's on the -- again,  
17 I can tell you where to look --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- but I don't -- I don't know off the  
20 top of my head specifically what's there.

21 Q. Your best recollection is, there have  
22 been three Wellness Needs Assessments, each of the  
23 last three years, and you've seen two reports?

24 A. That's my recollection up to this  
25 point. But, again, that team is busy. There's a

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 104

1 lot of reports.

2 Q. And do you have an understanding about  
3 anything that has been reported on from any of  
4 these Wellness Needs Assessments about students'  
5 use of social media?

6 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

7 THE WITNESS: Not the specific details.  
8 Again, with -- with social media, it's the type of  
9 thing that's, for us, always kind of hanging as an  
10 underlying -- you know, we're -- tend to be looking  
11 at more of what's presenting, like the suicide  
12 ideation reports, the -- you know -- the visits to  
13 counselors for anxiety and these things like that,  
14 which are more the presenting -- you know, so the  
15 degree to which we attribute any of those concerns  
16 to things that they're grappling with as a result  
17 of social media. But that's a slightly different  
18 issue. More on what we look at is the -- I would  
19 say the -- a lot of the other indicators.

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. Have you ever counseled or treated any  
22 Harford County Public School student?

23 A. Counseled?

24 Q. Yeah, as -- as in being a counselor.

25 A. No, I've never been in a counselor

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 105

1 role.

2 Q. So have you ever counseled or treated  
3 any Harford County Public School students?

4 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

5 Go ahead.

6 THE WITNESS: I have not.

7 BY MR. KEYES:

8 Q. Has any Harford County Public School  
9 student come to you and said that they believe  
10 they're addicted to social media?

11 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

12 THE WITNESS: Come to me specifically  
13 to say that?

14 BY MR. KEYES:

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Not in that form. To the degree which  
17 I've heard students raise concerns about social  
18 media most likely would have been in the context of  
19 the superintendent student advisory, because,  
20 again, that's a group that touches on a number of  
21 topics.

22 But in -- and there's -- there's often  
23 a mental health theme that they focus on, that the  
24 first year that was exclusively what they did, and  
25 other years it's been sort of one of many projects.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 106

1 And so it would come up in a small way, but it  
2 wasn't -- again, the topic was more mental health.

3 Q. When you say it came up, it came up in  
4 that some people talked about students using social  
5 media too much?

6 A. Using it too much or it being the  
7 source of anxiety or the source of sort of school  
8 avoidance or source of, you know, the sort of  
9 unhelpful academic impacts and social impacts.

10 Q. Are you able to identify for me the  
11 number of Harford County Public School students who  
12 have been diagnosed with social media addiction?

13 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

14 THE WITNESS: I am not able to answer  
15 that.

16 BY MR. KEYES:

17 Q. Are you able to identify for me the  
18 number of Harford County Public School students who  
19 have received counseling or treatment in connection  
20 with their use of social media?

21 A. I am not able to do that.

22 Q. Are you able to identify for me the  
23 number of Harford County Public School students who  
24 have received counseling or treatment in connection  
25 with problems arising from their use of social

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 107

1 media?

2 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

3 THE WITNESS: Again, no.

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. Are you able to identify for me the  
6 number of Harford County Public School students who  
7 received counseling or treatment in connection with  
8 the time they spend on social media?

9 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

10 THE WITNESS: No.

11 BY MR. KEYES:

12 Q. You mentioned a superintendent  
13 advisory. What is that?

14 A. So each year students apply to be  
15 members of the superintendent's student advisory.  
16 We usually select -- I think it's 16 to 20 members.  
17 We might have a few more. I'm not sure of the  
18 count now.

19 They're a combination of middle and  
20 high school students. They -- the day-to-day work  
21 with the team is managed by Dr. Paula Stanton. Her  
22 current title, I believe, is -- I want to say -- we  
23 just changed it. So I apologize; I don't remember  
24 her exact title. Manager of climate and culture.  
25 Her -- the specialist who works in her office,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 108

1 Meredith Heidt, also helps.

2 But that group meets multiple times a  
3 year. I think we have four formal meetings a year.  
4 But they -- they occasionally have, you know, other  
5 less formal meetings in between.

6 And they discuss issues related to  
7 students. They discuss issues related to, you  
8 know, the challenges in the students' lives.  
9 They -- they discuss --

10 But, normally, how we start the year is  
11 we ask them, what are the things students are  
12 talking about and students are, you know, focused  
13 on that -- that this group may be able to work on  
14 to help improve students' experiences. And so they  
15 choose -- they choose a variety of topics.

16 Q. Is that the superintendent's student  
17 advisory council?

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. Is that a "yes"?

20 A. Yes. Sorry.

21 (BULSON EXHIBIT 6, Emails, top one  
22 dated 1/7/19, Subject: Mental Health Initiatives,  
23 HCPS\_00164400, was marked for identification.)

24 BY MR. KEYES:

25 Q. Okay. I'm showing you what has been

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 109

1 marked as Bulson Exhibit 6.

2 A. Yours is 19. It's from Christian.

3 Q. This was produced to us with the  
4 Bates Numbers HCPS\_00164400. Single page. It's a  
5 series of two emails. One is from Christian Walker  
6 to you and then a second email from you to Laurie  
7 Namey; do you see that?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Who -- who is Christian Walker?

10 A. Christian Walker, in 2019 -- let me  
11 see. When is this? January 2019. He was a high  
12 school junior then. He was a member of the  
13 superintendent's student advisory.

14 At that time, Laurie Namey was the  
15 person who was responsible for the student  
16 advisory. She since changed positions. And so  
17 when I mentioned Dr. Stanton, that's who runs it  
18 now.

19 So Christian was a member that year.  
20 The subsequent year, Christian became a student  
21 member of the Board of Education.

22 Q. Okay. What -- what was Laurie Namey's  
23 position at the time?

24 A. What was the title? Again, it's the  
25 same position held by Dr. Stanton now, but we've

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 110

1 changed the title. The title would have been -- it  
2 was like "supervisor of diversity initiatives" or  
3 something to that effect.

4 Q. And you said Christian Walker at the  
5 time was a junior but later became --

6 A. -- a student member of the Board of  
7 Education.

8 Q. That's the Harford County Public  
9 Schools Board of Education?

10 A. Harford County Board of Education,  
11 yeah, during his senior year in high school.

12 Q. And is the student member a voting  
13 member of the board?

14 A. Of the board? In -- it's mixed. They  
15 vote on many things, not everything.

16 Q. Okay. In this email from Christian  
17 Walker to you, it's titled "Mental Health  
18 Initiatives." Do you see that?

19 A. Uh-huh.

20 Q. Is that a "yes"?

21 A. Yes. Sorry.

22 Q. It says: Dr. Bulson, happy new year.  
23 At the last superintendent's student advisory  
24 council meeting, I recall you tasked students with  
25 gathering information to report back on mental

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 111

1 health.

2 He says: Back --

3 A. Yeah. Yeah.

4 Q. -- back in November, I held meetings  
5 with students at my school and some students from  
6 other schools across the country, mainly at the  
7 high school level. Based on the information I  
8 gathered, and in cooperation with the current  
9 student board member and the HCRASC president, I  
10 compiled an outline of proposed mental health  
11 initiatives that I presented to Mr. Hennigan last  
12 month.

13 Do you see that?

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. Was that a "yes"?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. What is HCRASC?

18 A. Harford County Regional Association of  
19 Student Councils.

20 Q. Is that a --

21 A. It's a -- it's a school system student  
22 governance group.

23 Q. Okay. So is it made up entirely of  
24 students?

25 A. Yes, with a faculty advisor.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 112

1 Q. Okay. And then two paragraphs later,  
2 he says: The highlight of the meeting was  
3 increasing social media promotion with the help of  
4 students, who are already so deeply entrenched on  
5 social media platforms, and to feature you and  
6 other students in videos promoting crisis  
7 resources.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Did I read that correctly?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you remember this email from  
12 Christian Walker?

13 A. I don't remember the specific email.  
14 Christian emailed a lot. You can just tell from  
15 this he's a pretty resourceful kid.

16 The topic of discussion at the time --  
17 because in 2018-19 discussions about mental health  
18 were nowhere near as common or present in school  
19 system settings. And so this group's focus that  
20 year and what I think they ultimately decided on  
21 for their project for the year was to work on  
22 normalizing conversations related to mental health  
23 to -- so that students who were suffering could  
24 have a space -- could feel more comfortable  
25 bringing forward their concerns with the hope of

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 113

1 being able to address them. This is something  
2 Christian was immensely focused on.

3 Again, he wasn't the student board  
4 member that year. That year's student board  
5 member, Josh Oltarzewski, was also in the  
6 superintendent's student advisory, and he and  
7 Christian worked closely really leading the -- this  
8 particular initiative from the student advisory.

9 So the fact that Christian was going  
10 out and gathering information and those sorts of  
11 things is consistent with what was going on then  
12 and their work to, again, elevate conversations  
13 related to mental health.

14 (BULSON EXHIBIT 7, Harford County  
15 Public Schools Proposed Mental Health Initiatives,  
16 Education and Raising Awareness, Bates  
17 HCPS\_00164401-02, was marked for identification.)  
18 BY MR. KEYES:

19 Q. I'm showing you what has been marked as  
20 Bulson Exhibit 7. This was produced with the  
21 Bates Number HCPS\_00164401 through 164402.

22 This document was attached to  
23 Mr. Walker's email, which we just saw was  
24 Bulson Exhibit 6. Tell me when you've read this  
25 document.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 114

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. Did you read the exhibit?

3 A. I did.

4 Q. Okay. Is it your understanding that  
5 this is the description of the proposed components  
6 of a mental health initiative that Christian Walker  
7 sent to you?

8 A. That would make sense. I mean, I can't  
9 say that for sure. Again, there's -- we've  
10 produced a lot around this topic in different  
11 settings. But, I mean, it -- this seems consistent  
12 with Christian's work and the way he approached  
13 things, and there's nothing to suggest this  
14 isn't --

15 Q. It's --

16 A. -- the attachment that was here.

17 Q. It's titled "Harford County Public  
18 Schools Proposed Mental Health Initiatives," and  
19 then it says "Education and Raising Awareness." Do  
20 you see this?

21 A. Uh-huh. Yes.

22 Q. And then there are a bunch of bullet  
23 points underneath it?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And if you go down to the fifth bullet

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 115

1 point, it says: Social media campaign raising  
2 awareness for available resources featuring  
3 students via HCPS and school outlets.

4 Do you see that?

5 A. Yes, I do.

6 Q. And if you go back to the prior  
7 exhibit, Exhibit 6, the cover email has an  
8 attachment titled "HCPS Mental Health Initiatives."

9 So do you have any reason to think  
10 Exhibit 7 is not --

11 A. No, I don't.

12 Q. -- the attachment to Exhibit 6?

13 A. I do not have any reason to think it's  
14 not.

15 Q. Did you express any objection to  
16 Christian Walker to the idea of having a social  
17 media campaign to raise awareness for available  
18 mental health resources featuring students at  
19 Harford County Public Schools?

20 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

21 THE WITNESS: To my recollection, not  
22 at all. I mean, it's certainly something I would  
23 have supported.

24 BY MR. KEYES:

25 Q. And you -- you forwarded his proposal

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 116

1 to Laurie Namey. Did she express any objection to  
2 you to Christian Walker's idea of having a social  
3 media campaign to raise awareness for available  
4 mental health resources featuring students of  
5 Harford County Public Schools?

6 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

7 THE WITNESS: Again, to my  
8 recollection, there was no concern raised about  
9 such a campaign.

10 BY MR. KEYES:

11 Q. Did this campaign go forward?

12 A. I don't remember the form in which it  
13 did. I know there was some work that happened.  
14 Again, Christian never left anything undone. I  
15 can't tell you how much or how extensive it was.

16 Q. Well, do you recall participating in  
17 advancing that social media campaign?

18 A. I know there's suggestion here that  
19 there were going to be videos from the  
20 superintendent. I don't recall doing any --  
21 recording any videos for that myself. So whether  
22 that's not something we got to on the to-do list,  
23 but I don't recall doing that.

24 Q. Did Harford County Public Schools  
25 provide resources to this group to facilitate the

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 117

1 social media campaign?

2 A. I don't believe we did in this case. I  
3 think much of what would've happened here is -- is  
4 Christian and colleagues -- send the information --  
5 well, to the degree to which we would, for example,  
6 advertise the QPR training, I mean, we would've  
7 advertised that through varying online platforms.

8 So other opportunities related to this,  
9 I -- but I don't know what specific messaging on --  
10 on -- I don't recall exactly what happened.  
11 There's a lot that's happened over the last few  
12 years, but this was the first big year of that.

13 Q. Did you express to anyone any concern  
14 about using social media for this campaign because  
15 of a concern about affirmatively drawing students'  
16 attention to social media platforms?

17 A. No. In a way, I mean, I think we had  
18 all fully accepted and recognized that that's where  
19 students were getting their information. And I  
20 mean, it speaks to why we use social media in other  
21 settings also.

22 But I don't think that -- well, I mean,  
23 to me, that -- that doesn't change the conversation  
24 we're having, because, I mean, social media is  
25 still a place where a lot of people get their

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 118

1 information.

2 And this is -- you know, and this is --  
3 again, looking through the students' eyes, I mean,  
4 he acknowledged in the email, you know, how  
5 involved students are with social media and, you  
6 know, recognize that that was a way to try to  
7 change the information some of them were getting.

8 Q. I asked you before whether you  
9 objected; you said no.

10 A. No.

11 Q. I asked if you had any reservations;  
12 you said no. What did you think of the idea? Were  
13 you neutral on it --

14 MR. BYRD: Objection.

15 BY MR. KEYES:

16 Q. -- or a proponent of it?

17 MR. BYRD: Objection to misstating  
18 testimony.

19 Go ahead.

20 THE WITNESS: Let me just say, I  
21 supported the idea. I would continue to support  
22 the idea. But I also -- I mean, this was their  
23 plan. So, you know, did I facilitate it happening  
24 personally? No. But I didn't facilitate any of  
25 this. They did most of this work themselves. But

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 119

1 did I support everything that was in here? Yes.

2 BY MR. KEYES:

3 Q. Including the idea of using a social  
4 media campaign --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- to promote these mental health  
7 initiatives?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. You said a moment ago, "It speaks to  
10 why we use social media in other settings." What  
11 other social media does Harford County Public  
12 Schools use?

13 A. The ones I believe we use the most are  
14 still -- we have -- I'm familiar with our Facebook  
15 page, our Instagram site as well as a -- as a  
16 YouTube page that we employ for sharing school  
17 system information.

18 Q. With?

19 A. Students, parents, staff, community.

20 Q. And have you ever advocated for  
21 Harford County Public Schools to stop using a  
22 Facebook page?

23 A. No, because it's -- I mean, for  
24 example, one of the priorities for the board, both  
25 in our strategic plan and a specific priority that

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 120

1 was laid out to -- it was the board's priorities  
2 for the superintendent -- was improving relations  
3 with parents, greater transparency with parents and  
4 those sorts of things. So, again, in -- I think  
5 in -- in all of these situations we're -- we are  
6 still using the tools where they're getting the  
7 information.

8 Q. Have you ever advocated for  
9 Harford County Public Schools to stop using an  
10 Instagram page?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Have you ever advocated for  
13 Harford County Public Schools to stop using a  
14 YouTube channel?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Have you created content for  
17 Harford County Public Schools' Facebook page,  
18 Instagram page or YouTube channel?

19 A. I've contributed to content. I mean,  
20 I'm sometimes the content. But in terms of  
21 creating, others are posting.

22 Q. Do you have any role in reviewing  
23 content for approval before it's posted to the  
24 Facebook page, Instagram page or YouTube channel?

25 A. Instagram and Facebook are almost

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 121

1 exclusively run by Jillian Lader. I don't do  
2 anything to approve.

3 Some of the video -- normally, if I --  
4 if I'm in an approving situation, it's because  
5 normally that's with the YouTube channel, with the  
6 videos, often the videos that are featuring a  
7 speech from me or a message from me; or in some  
8 cases, I'll be the approver if we have a larger  
9 message that, you know, we're trying to  
10 disseminate, you know.

11 So there's times when I'll be an  
12 approver. But more often, it's for YouTube, and  
13 it's kind of for bigger-picture messages. The  
14 day-to-day use of Instagram and Facebook would  
15 mostly be Jillian.

16 Now, I believe we also have a  
17 Facebook -- no. I don't recall. Facebook or  
18 Instagram. Our HR team also has a page. A number  
19 of our schools have individual pages. And, again,  
20 I don't -- while I occasionally visit some of  
21 those, I -- I don't have any role in approving or  
22 editing what they put out.

23 Q. Do any of the schools have an  
24 independent YouTube channel?

25 A. I don't specifically know. I wouldn't

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 122

1 be surprised to know that, but I don't specifically  
2 know of any of them using that.

3 Q. Is there some policy within  
4 Harford County Public Schools such that someone  
5 within the central offices -- Jillian Lader, you,  
6 someone else -- has to review content that's posted  
7 to a school's Facebook or Instagram page?

8 A. I don't believe we have -- no,  
9 there's -- there's no specific expectation that  
10 something that's posted is reviewed by anyone here.

11 I mean, there may be situations where  
12 people have questions. They would go to someone  
13 like Jillian or possibly -- or general counsel or  
14 to one of their supervisors in ed services. But  
15 there's no expectation that people review content  
16 particularly at the school level before it's  
17 posted.

18 Q. You said that Harford County Public  
19 Schools' Instagram and Facebook pages are almost  
20 exclusively run by Jillian Lader. Who besides  
21 Ms. Lader runs those pages?

22 A. Runs them? Again, she has -- I don't  
23 know what Kyle's title is, assistant manager of  
24 communications, something like that. So  
25 Kyle Andersen might also post to it, particularly

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 123

1 if Jillian is on leave or something like that.

2 I mean, so it's still Jillian's direct  
3 report, but, you know, he -- I'm sure he posts  
4 things independent of her without her review.

5 Q. And who runs the Harford County Public  
6 Schools YouTube channel?

7 A. I'm pretty sure it's also Jillian, but  
8 Jay Behrens is our videographer. So I suspect he's  
9 uploading directly to YouTube most of the case when  
10 he's producing videos for the school system page --

11 Q. Is he --

12 A. -- channel.

13 Q. Is he an employee of Harford County  
14 Public Schools?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Are there other videographers employed  
17 by Harford County Public Schools?

18 A. He's the only videographer, yeah.

19 Q. And is that his full-time job, being a  
20 videographer for Harford County Public Schools?

21 A. He contributes to working  
22 communications in other ways, and he contributes to  
23 work for the department of technology in other  
24 ways, but that's his primary work.

25 (BULSON EXHIBIT 8, Emails, top one

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 124

1     dated 4/29/22, Subject: Safety Feedback, Bates  
2     HCPS\_00339224-226, was marked for identification.)

3     BY MR. KEYES:

4             Q.     I'm showing you what has been marked as  
5     Bulson Exhibit 8.

6                     MR. KEYES: Tab 31.

7     BY MR. KEYES:

8             Q.     This was produced to us with the  
9     Bates Numbers HCPS\_00339224 through 339226.

10                    You tell me when you've read these  
11     three emails -- two emails.

12             A.     Oh, okay. Now I get it. Okay.

13             Q.     Have you read the two emails in  
14     Bulson Exhibit 8?

15             A.     Yes.

16             Q.     The first one in time is in the lower  
17     half of the first page.

18             A.     Uh-huh.

19             Q.     It's an email from you on April 28th,  
20     2022. Subject: Safety Feedback.

21             A.     Uh-huh.

22             Q.     Do you see that?

23             A.     Yes.

24             Q.     And you say: These are the responses  
25     from last month's survey in my presentation.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 125

1                   And then you say: As we continue  
2                   working to create a safer environment for everyone,  
3                   what else should we consider?

4                   And then there's a long list of bullet  
5                   points.

6                   A.     Uh-huh.

7                   Q.     So did you conduct a survey, and the  
8                   list of bullet points are feedback that was  
9                   provided in the survey?

10                  A.     Yes. I can give you more details.

11                  Q.     You -- you said at last month's survey.  
12                  Were you doing a survey every month at that point?

13                  A.     Pretty much. So this was in the  
14                  context -- normally, monthly -- we don't do it  
15                  every month but close. We have our leadership  
16                  meetings, which includes all system administrators,  
17                  including principals from all the schools.

18                  At this time, Stacey Gerringer,  
19                  who's -- who is one of the people I sent the email  
20                  to, she is a principal in one of our elementary  
21                  schools. She and Donovan Brooks were leading kind  
22                  of a districtwide assessment of what we need to do  
23                  to create a safer environment in our schools.

24                  Eric Davis is copied here. He at the  
25                  time was chief of administration. He's now deputy

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 126

1 of operations. Donovan reports to him.

2 So I would -- I would give a  
3 presentation on a range of leadership issues  
4 affecting the school system. It wasn't uncommon at  
5 the time for me to put two or three questions into  
6 my presentation that provided a space for the  
7 administrators in the room just to give us their  
8 feedback on. And so these -- all of these  
9 responses came from -- we have about 125 people who  
10 attend those meetings. And so this is a range of  
11 responses.

12 I -- I believe this -- I don't  
13 recall -- so Donovan and Stacey made a presentation  
14 to that group. I don't recall if this was prior to  
15 them presenting to the group and this is to help  
16 them prepare for the presentation. Because they  
17 were gathering data to identify strategies that the  
18 school system should pursue to create a safer  
19 environment.

20 So I don't know if this was  
21 specifically connected to their presentation at one  
22 of those meetings, but I had made a point of  
23 putting a question. And I probably had some  
24 talking points related to safety.

25 I'm not remembering what was happening

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 127

1 in April of '22. But, you know, I touched on  
2 safety during my presentation to all of leadership.  
3 And then these were the answers that our mix of  
4 school-based and non-school-based administrators  
5 provided.

6 Q. You said, "We needed to create a safer  
7 environment in our schools." Why in -- in April of  
8 2022 did you need to create a safer environment in  
9 the schools?

10 A. We had been seeing an increase in what  
11 once upon a time might have felt like more  
12 anomalous behaviors. I think we are seeing an  
13 increase in fights. We are seeing an increase in  
14 general disruptions from students. And so there  
15 was a growing concern in the community and among  
16 the school leadership that student behavior was  
17 becoming increasingly challenging to confront.

18 Q. Do you believe that was a stressor for  
19 others in the student body?

20 A. Oh, certainly.

21 Q. If you go to the second page of this  
22 exhibit, about halfway down there's a bullet point  
23 that says "SROs."

24 A. Uh-huh.

25 Q. Are you there?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 128

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. Okay. Can you go to the next bullet  
3 point that says --

4 A. I thought that might be where you're  
5 going.

6 Q. -- should we continue to embrace social  
7 media?

8 Do you see that bullet point?

9 A. I do.

10 Q. That was one of the pieces of feedback  
11 that someone in --

12 A. Someone gave.

13 Q. -- that someone in the --

14 A. Raised a question.

15 Q. -- attendees provided, right? Yes?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And what action, if any, was taken on  
18 this suggestion to reconsider whether  
19 Harford County Public Schools should continue to  
20 embrace social media?

21 A. I can't answer specifically. I can  
22 tell you what would have happened with this  
23 information, because Dr. Gerringer, Mr. Brooks  
24 were -- they had a group they were meeting with.  
25 They were co-leading the group. They were doing

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 129

1 things like focus groups and -- and interviewing  
2 people about safety.

3 So to the degree that that particular  
4 suggestion was touched on, it probably would have  
5 come up in the broader context of -- of their  
6 conversations. I don't recall a recommendation  
7 coming from that group to modify how we --

8 Q. Embrace social media?

9 A. -- embrace social media.

10 But, again, I'm sure if I asked  
11 Mr. Brooks, he'd have an opinion. But I -- I don't  
12 know specifically what that group discussed on that  
13 particular suggestion from a -- from one of our  
14 leaders.

15 Q. This email and the report of the survey  
16 results is in April of 2022, right?

17 A. That's the date of the email, yeah.

18 Q. Okay. Since April of 2022, did  
19 Harford County Public Schools stop embracing social  
20 media?

21 A. Stop embracing social media? No.

22 Q. Since April of 2022, did Harford County  
23 Public Schools reduce how it embraced social media?

24 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

25 THE WITNESS: I honestly don't know the

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 130

1 specific answers to that, because, as I said, our  
2 technology team, their responses to what we're  
3 dealing with online, what we allow students access  
4 to, what we allow teachers access to is constantly  
5 changing.

6 And so I can't say specifically if any  
7 of our protocols for working with any of these  
8 entities has changed. But the degree to which we  
9 may have blocked something or something along those  
10 lines, I mean, that -- that's sort of a constant,  
11 moving target for our technology team.

12 And I would -- so the overall spirit of  
13 embracing social media, that's not a conversation  
14 we've had. But kind of one-off activities, if  
15 we're seeing, you know, increasing threats from any  
16 particular area, it's -- it's quite possible that  
17 more could have happened there.

18 BY MR. KEYES:

19 Q. Since April of 2022, did Harford County  
20 Public Schools reduce the way it affirmatively used  
21 social media?

22 A. Not to my knowledge.

23 Q. Since April of 2022, did Harford County  
24 Public Schools change the way it affirmatively used  
25 social media?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 131

1 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

2 THE WITNESS: Again, not to my  
3 knowledge.

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. Since April of 2022, has Harford Public  
6 Schools' use of social media increased?

7 A. Again, not to my knowledge either. I  
8 mean, the one conversation that we continue to go  
9 back to is: Should we continue to allow comments,  
10 for example, on the Facebook page? Because it's  
11 one thing for people to write things that are  
12 critical. It's another thing to post false  
13 information. We've had a number of situations  
14 where that page or others like it have increased  
15 challenges for us.

16 So I think there's some ongoing  
17 thinking. I mean, I think within the security  
18 protocol space, we don't know exactly what to do.  
19 But whenever we have a school incident, even like  
20 the one we paused for today, inevitably, one part  
21 of the debrief is: Here's when we heard what  
22 happened. Here's when something hit social media.  
23 Here's when the narrative started that created this  
24 big response of parents that became a problem for  
25 us to manage. And here's how much of that was

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 132

1 untrue or inaccurate and how much it contributed to  
2 the challenge we have confronting an incident in  
3 one of our schools.

4 I could probably point to any major  
5 crisis that occurred in a school and show how  
6 social media involvement -- and so whenever we  
7 do -- show how social media involvement has created  
8 additional challenges for law enforcement and  
9 school system leaders to contain and manage those  
10 crises.

11 And so at any debrief we have on  
12 particularly big incidents, I suspect it will be an  
13 ongoing consideration or is -- is there something  
14 we can do. I'm not sure there is, because if  
15 they're not using the school system social media  
16 sites, I mean, families have some of their own that  
17 they create that we have really no ability to even  
18 engage in and -- and try to provide accurate  
19 information.

20 But, you know, we've had -- we had a  
21 situation earlier in the week where students had to  
22 evacuate for an unsubstantiated threat of harm to  
23 the school. And the message went out to the  
24 community on Facebook that, oh, the poor kids are  
25 outside; they need water.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 133

1                   And all of a sudden, we have a very  
2 nice thing, people showing up with cases of water  
3 to give to the kids. But, of course, that creates  
4 a logistical mess for administrators who are trying  
5 to keep the kids in a certain place, and they'll  
6 be --

7                   I mean, so these -- I mean, this is  
8 something that we -- that's part of our review of  
9 every major incident, is like how do we deal with  
10 the misinformation, the --

11                  So in terms of considering how we  
12 embrace social media, I think we run into problems.  
13 I don't know that we've come up with solutions  
14 about what it means to embrace and -- but we  
15 certainly keep coming across places where it makes  
16 the work harder.

17                  Q.     Word spreads fast on social media?

18                  A.     It certainly does.

19                  Q.     And so if it's a good word such as --

20                  A.     It doesn't spread as fast, it seems --

21                  Q.     -- such as a --

22                  A.     -- anyway.

23                  Q.     -- such as a mental health initiative,  
24 it's worth doing, but if it's misinformation, it's  
25 a negative?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 134

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. You mentioned earlier there's a  
3 conversation about whether to allow people to post  
4 comments on the Harford County Public Schools  
5 Facebook page. What is the current practice? Are  
6 people allowed to comment?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Who -- who's involved in the  
9 conversation about whether to change that practice?

10 A. Well, the person who has to manage, who  
11 has to monitor the comments or respond to comments  
12 when they're inaccurate is Jillian, Jillian Lader,  
13 again, with the help of her number two,  
14 Mr. Andersen.

15 So conversations would sometimes come  
16 from her. But the, you know, suggestions to  
17 possibly limit comments in some cases have been  
18 made by board members, in some cases made by  
19 administrators. I think we have a number of  
20 administrators with opinions who would like to  
21 have -- you know.

22 And I know I have -- I can't state  
23 specifically. I've heard superintendents say to  
24 me -- I don't remember who -- that, you know, we  
25 stopped allowing comments on our social media

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 135

1 pages. I mean --

2 Q. A big part of Jillian Lader's job is  
3 responding to misinformation that spreads on social  
4 media?

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. Does Harford County Public Schools  
7 allow students to access YouTube on district-issued  
8 devices?

9 A. Yes, for instructional purposes and I  
10 think under a -- kind of a monitored -- I don't  
11 know the specifics of how it's done, but it's --  
12 it's something --

13 Q. But it does allow it?

14 A. It does allow it.

15 Q. Does Harford County Public Schools  
16 allow students to access YouTube on personal  
17 devices that are connected to the district's  
18 network?

19 A. I don't know the specific answer to  
20 that. I -- I -- I'd like to say, no, we don't.  
21 But I can't say that for certain.

22 Q. Why would you like to say that?

23 A. Only because I -- I know in the past  
24 we -- so we've gone back and forth. In the past,  
25 we've limited access to YouTube and -- so I know

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 136

1     there was a time at which we did that. I don't  
2     recall if that's changed, because I do know that  
3     it's used for instructional purposes. I do know  
4     that we have our own channel, as -- as we've  
5     discussed.

6                 So I don't know where it currently  
7     stands, the difference between what the students  
8     can access on their own devices versus school  
9     system-distributed ones. So I just -- I -- I just  
10    don't know the specific details of where that line  
11    is drawn.

12                Q.     Okay. As of today, you don't know  
13    whether Harford County Public Schools allows  
14    students to access YouTube on personal devices that  
15    are connected to the district's network, correct?

16                A.     Correct. Because we do allow it on  
17    their school system devices.

18                Q.     Does Harford County Public Schools  
19    allow teachers to use YouTube in the classroom?

20                A.     Yes.

21                Q.     Does Harford County Public Schools  
22    encourage teachers to use YouTube in the classroom  
23    because it's a valuable instructional tool?

24                MR. BYRD: Object to form.

25                THE WITNESS: I would argue -- I mean,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 137

1 we encourage to the degree that -- that there are  
2 YouTube videos that come up as potential resources  
3 for them to use connected to our curriculum.

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. So there are instances where  
6 Harford County Public Schools encourages teachers  
7 to use YouTube in the classroom as part of the  
8 curriculum?

9 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

10 BY MR. KEYES:

11 Q. Yes?

12 A. Allows them to use it as part of the  
13 curriculum, yes.

14 Q. Well, my question said "encourages."

15 A. "Encourages"?

16 Q. Yes. So --

17 A. Well, again, if it's -- if it's listed  
18 as a -- as a either recommended or approved  
19 resource -- if -- if listing something as approved  
20 resource equals encourage, sure.

21 Q. Okay. So there -- there are parts of  
22 the curriculum where YouTube is an approved  
23 resource?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. There are parts of the curriculum where

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 138

1 YouTube is a recommended resource?

2 A. I believe so. I'm not sure I can split  
3 those hairs, but I believe so.

4 Q. And where YouTube is an approved or  
5 recommended resource, Harford County Public Schools  
6 encourages teachers to use YouTube?

7 A. I think that's a fair conclusion.

8 Q. And is that true for both using YouTube  
9 in the classroom and also to use YouTube for  
10 homework assignments?

11 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

12 THE WITNESS: I believe so, that --  
13 obviously, approved videos identified by teachers,  
14 identified by the curriculum department for at  
15 least the ones that might be listed in the  
16 curriculum.

17 BY MR. KEYES:

18 Q. Have you ever advocated against  
19 Harford County Public Schools allowing students to  
20 access YouTube on district-issued devices?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Have you ever advocated against  
23 Harford County Public Schools allowing students to  
24 access YouTube on personal devices that are  
25 connected to the district's network?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 139

1 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

2 THE WITNESS: I haven't specifically,  
3 no.

4 BY MR. KEYES:

5 Q. Have you ever advocated for YouTube to  
6 be removed as an approved resource in the  
7 curriculum?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Have you ever advocated for YouTube to  
10 be removed as a recommended resource in the  
11 curriculum?

12 A. No.

13 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

14 BY MR. KEYES:

15 Q. Have you ever advocated for teachers  
16 to -- to not be allowed to assign YouTube for  
17 homework?

18 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

19 THE WITNESS: No.

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. Have you ever advocated for teachers to  
22 not be allowed to use YouTube in the classroom?

23 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

24 THE WITNESS: No.

25 BY MR. KEYES:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 140

1 Q. Have you ever advocated for  
2 Harford County Public Schools to stop using the  
3 YouTube channel?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Have you ever advocated for  
6 Harford County Public Schools to not include  
7 content on the YouTube channel that is targeted at  
8 students?

9 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

10 THE WITNESS: No.

11 BY MR. KEYES:

12 Q. Has the Board of Education encouraged  
13 you to broaden Harford County Public Schools' use  
14 of Facebook?

15 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

16 THE WITNESS: Not specifically, no.

17 BY MR. KEYES:

18 Q. Has the Board of Education encouraged  
19 you to broaden Harford County Public Schools' use  
20 of Instagram?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Has the Board of Education encouraged  
23 you to broaden Harford County Public Schools' use  
24 of the YouTube channel?

25 A. No.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 141

1 Q. Are you able to tell me, for the  
2 current school year, the number of discipline  
3 incidents that involve student use of social media?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Are you able to tell me the number of  
6 discipline incidents that involve student use of  
7 social media for any prior school year?

8 A. Not specifically, no.

9 Q. Are you able to tell me the -- for the  
10 current school year, the number of discipline  
11 incidents that involve student use of the  
12 defendants' platforms?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Are you able to tell me the number of  
15 discipline incidents that involve students' use of  
16 defendants' platforms for any prior school year?

17 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

18 THE WITNESS: Defendants' platform for  
19 any prior -- no.

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. Are you able to tell me the number of  
22 discipline incidents for any year that involve  
23 students' use of cell phones or personal electronic  
24 devices?

25 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 142

1 THE WITNESS: No.

2 BY MR. KEYES:

3 Q. Where would you go to get numbers about  
4 discipline incidents for students?

5 A. We maintain a database of discipline  
6 incidents for students. The challenge for the  
7 questions you ask is they wouldn't all include  
8 information about the role social media might have  
9 played or devices might have played in those  
10 incidents.

11 Q. Meaning, there's no way to just run a  
12 query of the database of discipline incidents for  
13 students to identify which ones or how many  
14 involved social media use in some way; is that  
15 correct?

16 A. Correct. It wouldn't be that simple.

17 (BULSON EXHIBIT 9, Document titled  
18 Mental Health Initiative, Bates HCPS\_00000158-159,  
19 was marked for identification.)

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. I'm showing you what has been marked as  
22 Bulson Exhibit 9. This was produced to us with the  
23 Bates Numbers HCPS\_158 and 159. Tell me when  
24 you've at least familiarized yourself with this  
25 document.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 143

1 (Discussion off the record.)

2 MR. BYRD: Are we taking a break, or he  
3 said just five more minutes?

4 MR. KEYES: He said five more minutes.

5 MR. BYRD: I gotcha.

6 MR. KEYES: So I'll try to finish this  
7 up, and then we can take a break.

8 MR. BYRD: Okay.

9 THE WITNESS: Okay.

10 BY MR. KEYES:

11 Q. Have you read Bulson Exhibit 9?

12 A. Yes, I have.

13 Q. Okay. Do you recognize it?

14 A. Not specifically, no.

15 Q. It's titled "Mental Health Initiative."

16 A. Uh-huh.

17 Q. It has a number of bullet points,  
18 correct?

19 A. Uh-huh.

20 Q. Is that a "yes"?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And part of the bullet points is using  
23 a social media campaign as part of this mental  
24 health initiative?

25 A. Yes.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 144

1 Q. And the social media campaign can  
2 highlight what mental health looks like, yes?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And talk about wellness?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And one of the bullet points is -- is  
7 focused on social media, a different message on  
8 each platform. Do you see that?

9 A. That's -- yes.

10 Q. And then another bullet point is  
11 "Snapchat, best way to reach students." Do you see  
12 that?

13 A. I do.

14 Q. Do you agree that Snapchat is the best  
15 way to reach students?

16 A. I honestly don't know. That's -- I  
17 don't know if this was produced by Christina -- I  
18 saw her name in here somewhere -- or if this was  
19 input from one of the students. But I'm not an  
20 expert on that, so I don't know.

21 But I would, to some degree, trust the  
22 suggestions of the -- if it's the people I'm  
23 thinking of who produced this, that would make  
24 sense.

25 Q. I'll represent it came from

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 145

1 Christina Alton's custodial file.

2 A. Okay. That makes sense.

3 Q. You mentioned Christina?

4 A. Yes, I did.

5 Q. And who is Christina Alton?

6 A. Christina Alton is our -- again, her  
7 title? Supervisor, mental health initiatives, I  
8 think, is what she is. Coordinator of -- I think  
9 it's coordinator of mental health initiatives. She  
10 works in student support services. She reports  
11 ultimately to Bernard Hennigan. And her entire  
12 focus is mental health.

13 Q. Did you have any conversation with  
14 Christina Alton at any point about how social media  
15 should not be used for a campaign about mental  
16 health initiatives?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Did you have any conversation with  
19 Christina Alton at any point about not using a  
20 social media campaign for any initiative?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Do you have any recollection of this  
23 social media campaign for this mental health  
24 initiative?

25 A. I don't recall specifically. I

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 146

1 interact with Ms. Alton from time to time. So I --  
2 I honestly don't know what year this was. There's  
3 not a date. But I -- I mean, I can tell you I have  
4 not discouraged the use of social media for things  
5 like this.

6 Q. Based on the content of Bulson  
7 Exhibit 9, do you recognize this to be a different  
8 mental health initiative from the mental health  
9 initiative we looked at before?

10 A. Yeah, by nature of the fact that  
11 Ms. Alton wasn't employed with us in this role when  
12 this happened.

13 Q. And when you say "this," you're  
14 referring to --

15 A. Sorry.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. Exhibit 7. Is this what it was? Yeah,  
18 Bulson Exhibit 7.

19 It was the initiative that was produced  
20 by Christian Walker. Ms. Alton joined our team  
21 after Mr. Walker was -- well, after this year. He  
22 was a junior. I don't remember exactly which year.  
23 It's been a few years since she joined our team.

24 Q. Okay. So between Exhibit 7 and  
25 Exhibit 9, we have documents talking about two

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 147

1 different mental health initiatives, yes?

2 A. Yeah -- or -- I mean, different or  
3 continuation, expansion on. I mean, the work was  
4 continuous. It evolved.

5 Q. All including as a component a social  
6 media campaign?

7 A. At least these two, yeah. So that's  
8 been a consistent element.

9 Q. To get the message out about the  
10 important components of mental health to students?

11 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

12 THE WITNESS: Yeah. I mean, that  
13 appears to be the intent, the idea that mental  
14 health is an important topic for students to be  
15 aware of, again, wanting to normalize conversations  
16 around mental health and knowing that we -- we  
17 needed to reach the students on the media where --  
18 that they are consuming.

19 MR. KEYES: I've been told we need to  
20 change the tape. So we'll take a break. Off the  
21 record.

22 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We are now going off  
23 the record at 3:01 p.m.

24 \* \* \*

25 (Whereupon, there was a recess in the

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 148

1 proceedings from 3:01 p.m. to 3:14 p.m.)

2 \* \* \*

3 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're now going back  
4 on the record at 3:14 p.m.

5 (BULSON EXHIBIT 10, Executive  
6 Leadership Team Agenda - 3/16/23, Bates  
7 HCPS\_00009831-835, was marked for identification.)  
8 BY MR. KEYES:

9 Q. Dr. Bulson, I'm handing you what has  
10 been marked as Bulson Exhibit 10. This document  
11 was produced with the Bates Numbers HCPS\_9831  
12 through 9835. This appears to be an agenda and  
13 notes on an executive leadership team meeting on  
14 March 16th, 2023. I'll give you a chance to read  
15 it. Tell me when you're ready.

16 A. Okay. I think I've read it. I've  
17 scanned most of it, but I focused on some parts  
18 more carefully than others.

19 Q. Okay. Do you recognize this document?

20 A. I recognize the format of the document.  
21 These are -- this is a pretty common version of our  
22 executive leadership team notes.

23 Q. How often do you meet with the  
24 executive leadership?

25 A. They meet every other week. My

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 149

1 attendance is sporadic, just for other commitments.  
2 And so, often, they'll meet without me. But looks  
3 like I was there that day.

4 Q. If you attend, do you chair the meeting  
5 or do you --

6 A. No --

7 Q. -- observe?

8 A. -- I do not. These were normally  
9 chaired by Cornell Brown, who was there that day.  
10 So he would have chaired this one.

11 Q. What position did Cornell Brown have at  
12 the time?

13 A. He was assistant superintendent of  
14 operations.

15 Q. And who typically prepares notes of the  
16 meetings?

17 A. Cornell and his assistant, they --  
18 he -- he actually keeps these -- this running notes  
19 during the meetings.

20 Q. And then does he distribute those notes  
21 after the fact --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- to attendees?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Does he include you as one of those

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 150

1 recipients when you've attended the meeting?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Does he include you as one of the  
4 recipients when you don't attend the meeting?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. When you get the -- the notes, do you  
7 read them?

8 A. Generally review them if I attended the  
9 meeting or maybe scanned them if I attended the  
10 meeting. I'm more likely to read them if I did not  
11 attend the meeting.

12 Q. And if you read the notes and you see  
13 something incorrect, do you follow up with  
14 Mr. Brown?

15 A. I haven't found that to be a problem,  
16 so I don't recall an instance where I've done that.

17 Q. Okay. And this Exhibit 10 lists the  
18 attendees.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Who is Patti Jo Beard?

21 A. She is executive director of  
22 facilities. So she reports to -- or she --  
23 Mr. Brown is no longer here, but she reports to the  
24 current assistant superintendent of -- of  
25 operations.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 151

1 Q. Who is Eric Davis?

2 A. Eric Davis, at the time, chief of  
3 administration. He's been reclassified to deputy  
4 of operations. So he's deputy superintendent for  
5 operations.

6 Q. Who is Heather Kutcher?

7 A. She is assistant superintendent,  
8 curriculum, instruction and assessment.

9 Q. What is that position?

10 A. She oversees, essentially, all of our  
11 curriculum and helps provide training for anyone  
12 who -- anything related to curriculum and  
13 instruction. And the accountability team  
14 Mr. Snyder is on currently reports to her as well.

15 Q. And when there is a question of what  
16 should be included or will be included in the  
17 curriculum, who is the final decider? Is it  
18 Ms. Kutcher or you or someone else?

19 A. Technically, the board approves all  
20 curriculum based on the recommendation of the  
21 superintendent. In practice, the person most  
22 responsible for bringing proposals, suggestions,  
23 actions related to the curriculum are Ms. Kutcher.

24 Q. Who is Michael O'Brien?

25 A. Michael O'Brien is an executive

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 152

1 director of secondary schools in the office of  
2 ed services.

3 Q. Who is Benjamin Richardson?

4 A. Assistant -- assistant superintendent  
5 of human resources.

6 Q. And finally, who is Renee Vaught?

7 A. Renee Vaught is retired now. She was  
8 Mr. O'Brien's counterpart. She's the executive  
9 director of elementary instruction.

10 Q. This appears to have an agenda of old  
11 topics and new topics.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Do you see that?

14 What is the difference between old  
15 topics and new topics?

16 A. Mr. Brown always maintained the -- the  
17 topics, and often they'd be ongoing discussions.  
18 So we would review each of the old topics, see if  
19 there was anything new to add.

20 Usually, his notes -- these aren't in  
21 color, but usually his notes -- he color-codes the  
22 new information that would have arisen in this  
23 particular meeting's -- this particular meeting.

24 So he'd update, usually, in red what  
25 was new to the notes in that one. And then, again,

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 153

1 new topics would be offered to him prior to the  
2 meeting by any of the executive leadership team  
3 members.

4 Q. So old topics are topics that have been  
5 discussed in a prior meeting, and they are  
6 scheduled for a continued session?

7 A. They tend to be ongoing. Some -- he  
8 will occasionally clear things out that we're no  
9 longer discussing, but -- so most anything that's  
10 considered an old topic has been discussed before  
11 but is still an ongoing thing to discuss.

12 Q. And if something is listed as a new  
13 topic, that's a topic that someone has told  
14 Mr. Brown in advance of the meeting I would like to  
15 discuss?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Because it's the first time it's being  
18 discussed, it's a new topic?

19 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. Is that fair?

22 A. That's my -- yeah. Yeah, it's the  
23 first time being brought to executive leadership  
24 team.

25 Q. Okay. One of the new topics listed

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 154

1 here is "YouTube/Student Device Use." And in  
2 parentheses, it says "(HK)." Do you see that?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. That's the initials for Heather  
5 Kutcher?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And does that indicate, as you  
8 understand his practice regarding note-taking, that  
9 Ms. Kutcher is the one who requested that this  
10 topic be added --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- for discussion?

13 Okay. If you turn to the page with the  
14 Bates Numbers 9835 in the lower right-hand  
15 corner --

16 A. Uh-huh.

17 Q. -- do you see the new topics on that  
18 page?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And what is listed as New Topic Number  
21 10 is titled "YouTube/Student Device Use." Do you  
22 see that?

23 A. Uh-huh. Yes, I do.

24 Q. The -- the second bullet point --  
25 actually, the first bullet point says: Recent

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 155

1 position/action taken by YouTube concerning  
2 accessibility to certain content by children under  
3 13 have resulted in technology discussions  
4 surrounding the acceptable access to YouTube and  
5 devices at the elementary level.

6 Did I read that correctly?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Do you remember that issue coming up?

9 A. Vaguely. Vaguely.

10 Q. What do you remember vaguely about that  
11 issue?

12 A. Well, again, just with a change and --  
13 you know, again, these are the -- I think this  
14 was -- it was kind of similar to many cases where  
15 small changes in technology cause us to relook at  
16 policy or practice -- I think it's probably more  
17 practice than policy -- to understand how best  
18 to -- you know, how much to use certain things  
19 within the curriculum. Do we need to make -- do we  
20 need to change to different material?

21 And so, I mean, again, not a lot of  
22 specifics about why we engage in this particular  
23 conversation other than, you know, we were -- we  
24 were dealing with a new -- with a change to how  
25 YouTube, you know, provided access to certain

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 156

1 things.

2 Q. The second bullet point says:  
3 Discussion was had around best practice --

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. -- and potential impact to teachers if  
6 filters were put in place at all elementary  
7 schools.

8 Did I read that correctly?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Was this a discussion about the impact  
11 on teachers' ability to use YouTube if some kind of  
12 additional filters were put in place at elementary  
13 schools?

14 A. Yeah, if it made it harder for them to  
15 access material that they had identified as, you  
16 know, helpful to the curriculum. Let me put it  
17 that way.

18 Q. The -- the third bullet point says:  
19 Schools are asking for guidance, and pushback has  
20 been received by stakeholders around this topic.

21 Do you see that?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Is this reflecting the discussion at  
24 this meeting that stakeholders were pushing back on  
25 the idea of adding some kind of additional filters

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 157

1 for YouTube at the elementary schools?

2 A. Yeah. Again, not recalling the  
3 specifics of the conversation, but, you know, from  
4 the notes, gleaning that -- in this particular  
5 case, "stakeholders" would be teachers, possibly  
6 administrators speaking on behalf of teachers.

7 And to -- I mean, the best of my  
8 understanding, it would have -- again, it would  
9 have made it harder for them to access materials,  
10 maybe materials that they'd used in the past that  
11 they knew to be sort of acceptable and appropriate.  
12 But knowing that filters are sometimes blunt  
13 instruments, that makes it a little hard for them  
14 to identify the materials they'd want to use.

15 Q. You understand the reference to  
16 "stakeholders" in this note to be to teachers?

17 A. That's my understanding. I can't think  
18 of who else we would have heard from in this  
19 particular setting. I mean, there's a possibility  
20 that Ms. Kutcher might have been referring to  
21 others on her curriculum team who would be helping  
22 create curriculum, but I suspect this -- in this  
23 case it's more teachers, based on context here.

24 Q. And so the reference to pushback by  
25 stakeholders is a pushback by teachers in your --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 158

1           A.     Yeah, frustration that these changes  
2     could make their job harder.

3           Q.     We want access to certain YouTube  
4     content, and if you actually go forward with  
5     additional filters, that's going to block content  
6     that we want to use?

7                     MR. BYRD:   Object to form.

8     BY MR. KEYES:

9           Q.     Is that your understanding?

10          A.     That's my understanding.

11          Q.     Okay.   The fourth bullet point says:  
12     The discussion ended by reaching consensus that  
13     teachers and other key stakeholders should be  
14     engaged to obtain feedback before any change in  
15     practice is made.   The need to, quote, "strike the  
16     right balance," end quote, is the goal.   A plan of  
17     action is TBD.

18                    Did I read that correctly?

19          A.     Yes.

20          Q.     Okay.   Here, there's a reference to  
21     "teachers and other key stakeholders."   What is  
22     your understanding of who the other key  
23     stakeholders are besides teachers?

24          A.     I would argue, most likely, folks from  
25     our technology team.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 159

1 Q. Ms. Kutcher's staff?

2 A. No, no, no. Drew Moore's staff.

3 Q. Oh, okay.

4 A. And -- yeah, I don't think Drew would  
5 have been in this meeting. Drew reports to  
6 Eric Davis. So, you know, any action item related  
7 to that would have gone out through Dr. Davis.

8 And, again, possibly the people who do  
9 curriculum writing or curriculum development or  
10 those who do PD around curriculum might have a --  
11 might provide useful input here also.

12 But, again, in most cases, this is --  
13 this is teachers with a handful of others. But  
14 probably that's the technology side.

15 Q. It says: A plan of action is TBD.

16 Is that "to be determined"?

17 A. That would be my understanding.

18 Q. Was this issue discussed at subsequent  
19 meetings of the --

20 A. I don't recall.

21 Q. -- executive leadership team?

22 A. I don't recall. If it was, it would  
23 have shown up on additional agenda, which probably  
24 would have gone to you; or if there was a -- if  
25 they sort of worked out a decision, that's

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 160

1 something that she might have recommended we not  
2 include in other meetings.

3 Q. This meeting took place in March of  
4 2023.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Are you aware of -- of Harford County  
7 Public Schools making any change regarding  
8 elementary-level students' access to YouTube since  
9 March of 2023?

10 A. I don't recall the specifics. Again,  
11 it's one of the many kind of moving targets in the  
12 technology world for us.

13 Q. Are you able to identify incremental  
14 costs that Harford County Public Schools incurred  
15 because of students' use of social media?

16 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

17 THE WITNESS: "Incremental costs"?  
18 Again, I can speak to examples of why things would  
19 have gotten more costly, but I'm not sure that  
20 that's specifically what you're asking.

21 I mean, we provided the estimates  
22 through the earlier exhibit. But in terms of -- so  
23 I guess I'm not clear what you're asking about,  
24 beyond what's been provided in those exhibits.

25 BY MR. KEYES:

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 161

1 Q. Sure. Are you able to give me --  
2 strike that.

3 Are you able to identify expenditures  
4 of money by Harford County Public Schools because  
5 of students' use of social media that it had not  
6 incurred before?

7 A. Let me suggest, I would -- I would know  
8 where to look. But, again, a lot of it would be  
9 consistent with things that we shared in Exhibit,  
10 whatever it was, Number 5 with the numbers on it.

11 You know, for example, purchasing  
12 technology tools to help with filtering, you know,  
13 I know that we've upgraded and changed, you know,  
14 the tools we use there, you know, a handful of  
15 times while I've been here trying to keep up with  
16 the changing technology.

17 You know, I -- I think I've already  
18 addressed a little bit the expenditures we've made  
19 in safety and security, partly because of, you  
20 know, increases in the amount of time we're dealing  
21 with issues, some portion of which is connected to  
22 social media.

23 So, again, I can -- I can anecdotally,  
24 I think, produce some of that. But in terms of the  
25 specific numbers or amounts, I would definitely

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 162

1 defer to my teams who work most closely with that.

2 Q. You identified technology tools and  
3 safety and security measures. Is there another  
4 category you would add to the list?

5 A. I mean, generally, I mean, as we talked  
6 about, administrator time. I think a big part of  
7 the cost there is opportunity costs for them to be  
8 able to do things related to focus on -- focusing  
9 on instruction rather than on discipline and  
10 student management.

11 It would probably be a similar cost  
12 when we're talking about any educators. The time  
13 they're spending addressing conflicts that -- that  
14 initiate on social media is -- is cutting into time  
15 they're spending either providing instruction or  
16 preparing for instruction.

17 So there's a lot of opportunity costs  
18 that the dollar is hard to pin down, so it's more  
19 lost productivity. But -- and then regard to  
20 specific costs, you know, purchasing things to help  
21 with that, I would say that probably lives more in  
22 the technology realm.

23 Q. So you've identified what you call  
24 "lost productivity," and you've identified lost  
25 time. My question, though, was: Are you able to

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 163

1 identify expenditures of money by Harford County  
2 Public Schools because of students' use of social  
3 media that it had not incurred before?

4 And you identified technology tools and  
5 safety and security measures.

6 A. Yeah. Earlier, we talked about  
7 vandalism. That was another cost.

8 Q. Any other bucket?

9 A. We've dramatically grown our mental  
10 health resources to the degree to which we're  
11 pushing -- that we're dealing with that.

12 Again, off the top of my head, you  
13 know, the degree to which we're dealing with mental  
14 health in our -- and the benefits we provide, to  
15 the degree to which that's increasing our -- our,  
16 you know, insurance costs, whether it's the stress  
17 placed on teachers for some of the things they're  
18 dealing with or -- you know, we also -- many of our  
19 teachers have children in our schools, and we pay  
20 for those costs.

21 So, I mean, I think it would show up in  
22 a lot of different places. And I think you could  
23 speak to various expenditures. I mean, I could  
24 probably go down the list from that earlier exhibit  
25 and identify things that I think would be

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 164

1 contributing in those areas. But also in every  
2 case, the -- the person responsible for filling  
3 that out would probably have better specifics than  
4 I would or at least a more comprehensive list.

5 Q. Okay. On the first bucket you  
6 identify, technology tools, are you able to  
7 identify any technology tool by -- by name?

8 A. That's -- that's not a world where I  
9 spend a lot of time.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. You know, for example, I know, for -- I  
12 mean, for me, it's more generic. I, you know,  
13 spoke to my head of technology recently about a  
14 product I wasn't aware we were using. But it was a  
15 filtering product. And he said, "Oh, yeah, we've  
16 been using that one for four years." Because I'll  
17 occasionally meet and hear about various products  
18 that are out there.

19 So, I mean, I can state confidently  
20 that these expenditures have occurred, but down to  
21 the -- the names and specifics, that is kind of  
22 left to those experts.

23 Q. Okay. On the first bucket of  
24 technology tools, are you able to identify any of  
25 the technology tools by function? You mentioned

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 165

1 filtering.

2 A. I mentioned filtering.

3 Q. Any other?

4 A. Not that's jumping to mind right now.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I -- I -- because I don't believe  
7 we're -- you know, I'm aware of tools that are out  
8 there for monitoring students online. I don't  
9 believe we're using any of those.

10 I think one of the tools is actually  
11 sort of one of those ones that looks for keywords  
12 that appear in posts and things like that. I  
13 believe we're using something like that. So I  
14 don't know if that's the same as a filtering. It's  
15 a -- it's a different type of tool.

16 Q. Were you finished?

17 A. I think so.

18 Q. Does Harford County Public Schools use  
19 a filtering product now?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Do you know what the name is?

22 A. I do not.

23 Q. Do you know what the filtering product  
24 does?

25 A. Specifically? Only generally. No. I

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 166

1 mean --

2 Q. What's your general understanding --

3 A. The --

4 Q. -- of what the filtering product does?

5 A. The idea --

6 Q. Not -- not the one that you're [sic]  
7 may purchase down the road. The one you use now.

8 A. Yeah. No. I mean, my understanding,  
9 it's -- it's always looking for harmful content.  
10 It's also looking for, you know, malicious content  
11 that could do harm to the system.

12 Q. And so --

13 A. And it's trying to protect our sort of  
14 network, data security from -- from sort of  
15 malicious content but also filtering for  
16 inappropriate content for the workplace and the  
17 classroom.

18 Q. And so is this filtering product then  
19 restricting student access to websites and content  
20 on the Internet?

21 A. Students and staff. And it's mostly  
22 successful.

23 Q. And do you know whether Harford County  
24 Public Schools has a filtering product because it's  
25 required by federal law to do so?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 167

1           A.    I don't know that I can speak to whose  
2    laws we're complying with on that particular one.  
3    But, you know, I -- I do know we have extensive  
4    filtering products. I just don't know the  
5    authority for that specifically.

6           Q.    Isn't it true that even if social media  
7    did not exist, Harford County Public Schools would  
8    still need a filtering product to restrict  
9    students' access to the rest of the Internet?

10           MR. BYRD: Object to form.

11           THE WITNESS: I'm not sure I'm the  
12   expert who could speak to that.

13   BY MR. KEYES:

14           Q.    What is your understanding of what the  
15   monitoring software monitors? Did you say it  
16   monitors students' online activity?

17           A.    I don't believe what we're using is  
18   that -- I don't believe we're using one that does  
19   students' sort of outside online activity. I think  
20   what we're using is something that's more internal  
21   to our system. But, again, on the specifics, I am  
22   not the guy to answer those.

23           Q.    But is it monitoring what students  
24   are -- are accessing or writing on their  
25   district-issued devices?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 168

1 MR. BYRD: Object to form. Foundation.  
2 He's answered.

3 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I -- I don't know  
4 the answer to that question.

5 BY MR. KEYES:

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I believe there is some monitoring of  
8 what's happening on the district-issued because  
9 they're running through our network.

10 Q. Isn't it true that even if social media  
11 did not exist, Harford County Public Schools would  
12 still need some type of monitoring --

13 MR. BYRD: Object --

14 BY MR. KEYES:

15 Q. -- software --

16 MR. BYRD: Object --

17 BY MR. KEYES:

18 Q. -- to -- to monitor students' activity  
19 online or using their district-issued device?

20 MR. BYRD: Object to form. You asked,  
21 literally, that same question a few minutes ago.

22 THE WITNESS: Well, and I just --

23 MR. KEYES: No.

24 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure I  
25 understand --

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 169

1 MR. KEYES: Before I asked about a  
2 filtering product. Now I'm asking about the  
3 monitoring.

4 MR. BYRD: Okay. Well --

5 MR. KEYES: So it's literally not the  
6 same question.

7 BY MR. KEYES:

8 Q. Let me ask the question again.

9 Isn't it true that even if social media  
10 did not exist, Harford County Public Schools would  
11 still need some type of monitoring software to  
12 monitor students' activity online using their  
13 district-issued device?

14 MR. BYRD: Object to form. Foundation.

15 THE WITNESS: I -- I honestly don't  
16 know that I can answer the specifics. I -- I -- we  
17 would probably need some form of monitoring, but I  
18 can't -- it -- it's hard to envision a world  
19 without any social media.

20 BY MR. KEYES:

21 Q. Okay. The second bucket you mentioned  
22 are safety and security measures?

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. You said, "some portion of which is  
25 connected to social media."

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 170

1           A.     Because, yes, we've -- we've increased  
2     our safety and security staff significantly in the  
3     last two years.

4           Q.     What portion of Harford County Public  
5     Schools' expenditures on safety and security  
6     measures are attributable to social media?

7           A.     For me, it's hard to calculate that  
8     portion because I said -- you know, when we're  
9     dealing with, I mean, fights, any sort of  
10    disciplinary infractions, anything, there is very  
11    often a social media component where a conflict  
12    might start on social media.

13                   So the fact that we have experienced an  
14    increase in those areas, it's hard to specifically  
15    attribute it, at least for me in my experience to  
16    specifically attribute it. Again, I would rely on  
17    my experts who are closer to the field on that in  
18    their day-to-day experiences.

19                   But, again, historically, my experience  
20    as an administrator, you know, many of our  
21    conflicts start outside of school, very frequently  
22    through a social media interaction, and then they  
23    turn into incidents in school.

24                   And so as we're seeing increased  
25    incidents, you know, there's some percentage. It's

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 171

1 just hard to -- for me personally to calculate  
2 that.

3 Q. Separate from students promoting fights  
4 on social media or engaging in some kind of  
5 conflict through posts on social media, do you see  
6 a basis for attributing any of Harford County  
7 Public Schools' expenditures on safety and security  
8 measures to social media?

9 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

10 THE WITNESS: Again, I think it's hard  
11 to tease out. I feel like I've kind of said this  
12 in a bunch of different ways.

13 You know, we hire safety and security  
14 to -- to address the varying safety and security  
15 threats we have. Some are very much connected to  
16 social media. Some are, you know, other things  
17 that don't involve it, but -- again, but I feel  
18 like I've sort of said this a bunch of different  
19 ways. So I'm not quite sure what nuance you're  
20 seeking here.

21 BY MR. KEYES:

22 Q. Well, I -- I get that there are some  
23 security threats that are not connected to social  
24 media. I get that there are some security threats  
25 that are connected to social media because social

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 172

1 media is the vehicle by which students are  
2 promoting fights or escalating conflict in some  
3 way.

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. Okay. I'm asking whether -- separate  
6 from students using social media as the vehicle to  
7 promote fights or escalate conflicts, is there some  
8 other reason you would attribute safety and  
9 security measures to social media?

10 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

11 THE WITNESS: Not offhand in this  
12 moment.

13 BY MR. KEYES:

14 Q. Okay. You -- you mentioned vandalism.

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. I did ask you about vandalism before.

17 A. Uh-huh.

18 Q. I just wanted to make sure, since we  
19 talked about it earlier today, you've not thought  
20 of some other vandalism that you understand is  
21 attributable to social media; is that correct?

22 A. No, I haven't gone -- yeah, reflecting  
23 on this. There hasn't been a lot of time.

24 Q. Okay. And you talked about the growing  
25 resources for addressing mental health issues?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 173

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. You acknowledge that lots of students  
3 have mental health issues that aren't connected to  
4 social media, correct?

5 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

6 THE WITNESS: I think it's hard for me  
7 to determine where the connection to social media  
8 might -- I don't -- we know that the social -- that  
9 the mental health issues exist. I think it's --  
10 it -- it's challenging to know how much to  
11 attribute to social media.

12 I think it -- and I'm not a mental  
13 health expert/clinician in that area. So I'm  
14 certain some mental health issues are in no way  
15 connected to social media, but I couldn't -- I  
16 couldn't find the line.

17 MR. KEYES: I'm keeping my eye on the  
18 clock here.

19 BY MR. KEYES:

20 Q. Do you use YouTube?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Do you have a YouTube account?

23 A. Yes, I think so.

24 Q. When did you first set up the YouTube  
25 account?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 174

1 A. Oh, I have no idea.

2 Q. Months ago? Years ago?

3 A. Years.

4 Q. How often do you use YouTube?

5 A. Probably, now, weekly. Sometimes more  
6 than weekly.

7 Q. When was the last time you used it?

8 A. Last week maybe.

9 Q. And --

10 A. Last -- best of my recollection.

11 Q. What -- what are the ways you use  
12 YouTube?

13 A. One of my favorite ways is, you know,  
14 related to music, concerts, musicians, that sort of  
15 thing.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Watching, you know -- searching for  
18 videos related to that personally.

19 Q. What else?

20 A. That's really the biggest. I mean, I  
21 also do use it, occasionally, professionally. I  
22 always review the school system YouTube.

23 There are some situations where I'll  
24 consume YouTube in the context of a conference or a  
25 training. So it has instructional value in

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 175

1 addition to just straight-up entertainment value.

2 Q. When you say you review the school  
3 system YouTube, you mean you go to the Harford  
4 County Public Schools --

5 A. Yeah. When we produce --

6 Q. -- YouTube --

7 A. -- a video, you know, if it's -- you  
8 know, for example, I -- every Thursday we send out  
9 kind of a system update to all staff. Every Friday  
10 we send out a -- a similar system update to our  
11 board and some community members. We often embed  
12 videos.

13 You know, today I reviewed the -- the  
14 system message to the board. It included a video  
15 that we produced last week for Teacher Appreciation  
16 Week.

17 Q. That's a video that Harford County  
18 Public Schools' staff produced --

19 A. Produced.

20 Q. -- and then posts to the YouTube  
21 channel?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And to draw attention to it among  
24 staff, the Board of Education, others, you send an  
25 email that embeds the video or a link to the video?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 176

1           A.    Yeah.  I mean, specifically, what we do  
2   is we produce a Smore and then include YouTube  
3   videos in that format.

4                    So it's -- we essentially provide a web  
5   link where people get updates on a wide variety of  
6   topics.  And in some cases, they include videos  
7   that, you know, take -- take you to the YouTube  
8   channel.

9           Q.    Is there any other way you typically  
10  consume content on YouTube?

11          A.    Not necessarily.

12          Q.    Do you have a Facebook account?

13          A.    I do.

14          Q.    Do you have an Instagram account?

15          A.    I do.

16          Q.    Do you have a TikTok account?

17          A.    I think technically I do.  I think I've  
18  been in it twice.

19          Q.    Do you have a Snapchat account?

20          A.    No.

21          Q.    When did you set up the TikTok account?

22          A.    Within the last two years.  Like I  
23  said, I -- I don't recall the reason, whether  
24  someone sent me a link that I wanted to view;  
25  because I didn't have the account, I had to set up

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 177

1 the account to view it. I don't recall  
2 specifically why.

3 Q. When was the last time you looked at  
4 your TikTok account?

5 A. It's been months. I couldn't tell you  
6 for sure.

7 Q. Okay. When did you set up your  
8 Facebook account?

9 A. That's been much longer. I've had a  
10 Facebook account -- I couldn't begin to tell you.  
11 It's been quite some time.

12 Q. More than five years ago?

13 A. More than five years ago.

14 Q. More than ten years ago?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. More than 15 years ago?

17 A. Probably more than 20 years ago, but  
18 after that I'm not sure.

19 Q. And why did you set it up?

20 A. Again, at the time, it was -- it was a  
21 place where a lot of people were consuming  
22 information. I think I was a little bit late to  
23 join.

24 I was a school system administrator,  
25 and, you know, school systems were kind of getting

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 178

1 in the business of having Facebook accounts. I've  
2 never been a particularly active participant or  
3 poster there, but, you know, occasionally, I'll  
4 look.

5 Q. So -- so how often do you view your  
6 Facebook account?

7 A. I'll occasion -- you know, every couple  
8 of weeks because I -- I still occasionally will get  
9 updates when friends or -- you know, people who  
10 I've friended on Facebook, when they post, I'll  
11 occasionally get updates. Every now and then, I'll  
12 look at it. More often than not, I don't.

13 Q. When was the last time you looked at  
14 your Facebook account?

15 A. Two weeks.

16 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

17 BY MR. KEYES:

18 Q. And do you post on your Facebook  
19 account?

20 A. I can't recall the last time I posted.

21 Q. Have you ever?

22 A. Yes. There's a limited number of posts  
23 there, but over the years it's very, very few.

24 Q. And when did you set up your Instagram  
25 account?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 179

1 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

2 Don't defendants already have the  
3 ability to get all this information you're asking?  
4 You know, it's Instagram. As well as --

5 MR. KEYES: I don't -- I don't think  
6 so.

7 THE WITNESS: Anyway --

8 MR. KEYES: I -- I can't just go to --

9 MR. BYRD: All right.

10 MR. KEYES: -- one of these companies  
11 and say, "Give me the information on Ken Byrd."

12 BY MR. KEYES:

13 Q. When did you set up your Instagram  
14 account?

15 A. I'm trying to think how far back. It's  
16 probably in the 20-years-ago range, too. Not  
17 knowing when they started, I probably joined  
18 Instagram sooner after it was founded than  
19 Facebook, but I wasn't an early adopter.

20 Q. Why did you set up this account with  
21 Instagram?

22 A. Again, it's an opportunity to engage in  
23 the sharing that was in that network. Again, in  
24 all those years, I probably have 30 or 40 posts.

25 Q. And how often do you view your

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 180

1 Instagram account?

2 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

3 THE WITNESS: Lately, very rarely.

4 That's -- I mean, I might have looked at it two or  
5 three times in the last few months.

6 BY MR. KEYES:

7 Q. When was the last time you looked at  
8 it?

9 A. I can't recall. Maybe last week,  
10 although I'm not sure.

11 Q. Do you have kids?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. How -- how old are your kids now?

14 A. My daughter -- I have one child. She's  
15 about to turn 21.

16 Q. When she was in middle school, did she  
17 have a cell phone?

18 A. In middle school, yes.

19 MR. BYRD: Object to form. Relevance.  
20 I know you've done this in all the cases. But  
21 that's my objection. You can go on.

22 BY MR. KEYES:

23 Q. And did she continue using a cell phone  
24 in high school?

25 A. Yes.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 181

1 Q. Has she had a YouTube account?

2 A. I presume so. I don't know if she had  
3 a specific account. At first, she shared most of  
4 her accounts with my wife originally, and I assume  
5 she has one now.

6 Q. Did she have one in high school?

7 A. Again, I don't know when it would have  
8 switched from my wife to my daughter.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. My wife managed most of that.

11 Q. Did your daughter have a Facebook  
12 account in high school?

13 A. I believe so.

14 Q. Did she have a Facebook account in  
15 middle school?

16 A. I don't think so, but I don't recall.

17 Q. Did your daughter have an Instagram  
18 account in high school?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Did she have an Instagram account in  
21 middle school?

22 A. Again, I don't recall. I don't know  
23 when what started. It didn't start right away.

24 Q. Did your daughter have a TikTok account  
25 in high school?

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 182

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Did she have a TikTok account in middle  
3 school?

4 A. Again, I don't know when that started.

5 Q. Did your daughter have a Snapchat  
6 account in high school?

7 A. I believe so, yes.

8 Q. Did she have a Snapchat account in  
9 middle school?

10 A. Again, don't know.

11 Q. So do you know when she first started  
12 having a Facebook account, an Instagram account,  
13 TikTok account or a Snapchat account?

14 A. Again, as I've said, just completely to  
15 herself that wasn't shared with my wife, I know  
16 she's had those through high school. I -- I don't  
17 know when that transitioned over.

18 Q. When she had a cell phone in middle  
19 school, did you or your wife impose limits on how  
20 she could use it?

21 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

22 THE WITNESS: Yes.

23 BY MR. KEYES:

24 Q. What were the limits you imposed on her  
25 use of her cell phone in middle school?

## CONFIDENTIAL

Page 183

1           A.    I believe she got her phone in  
2   7th grade. And the first requirement for having a  
3   phone is that we could review it at any time with  
4   no -- you know, no arguments. She has always  
5   shared an account with my wife. So my wife could  
6   see her texts, her call logs and --

7           Q.    And her --

8           A.    Well --

9           Q.    -- social media activity?

10          A.    She didn't -- she would be -- there was  
11   an expectation that -- for example, Instagram, she  
12   was always a friend on Instagram so she could  
13   always see the social media activity in Instagram  
14   also. So the degree -- how that was managed in the  
15   others -- but the short answer is yes.

16          Q.    Okay. Did you impose any limits on  
17   when she could use her cell phone during the day,  
18   either such that there were times when the phone  
19   couldn't be accessed or limits on how much time she  
20   could spend on her phone?

21          A.    We never specified that.

22          Q.    Okay. And so was that the case  
23   throughout her time in middle school and high  
24   school, is there were no time limits?

25          A.    Correct.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 184

1 Q. Why not? Why not impose time limits on  
2 her use of her cell phone?

3 A. If we sensed there were concerns, we  
4 would have addressed it. Early on, she had limits  
5 on the amount of data she could use. It wasn't  
6 until later that we, you know, allowed that to be  
7 more available, because we would monitor that as  
8 well.

9 But I don't -- again, don't know when  
10 that switched over. Again, at the time, we -- we  
11 felt like we had enough visibility in -- to -- to  
12 see what she was doing and monitor what she was  
13 doing.

14 Q. Were there any parental controls that  
15 you considered using but then decided not to?

16 MR. BYRD: Object to form.

17 THE WITNESS: Yeah, again, not that I  
18 recall. I mean, we used a number of parental  
19 controls early on, if I recall. But, again, I  
20 can't speak to specifically platforms, because,  
21 again, much of that negotiation happened between my  
22 wife and my daughter.

23 BY MR. KEYES:

24 Q. So when you refer to the parental  
25 controls you used, were those controls at the

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 185

1 device level on the cell phone or were they within  
2 the social media accounts?

3 A. Again, I don't have the details related  
4 to that.

5 Q. Okay. So -- but you said before,  
6 "We used a number of parental controls early on."  
7 Do you -- do you --

8 A. It was -- it was --

9 Q. Can you identify any of those for me  
10 now?

11 A. Well, when I think of parental  
12 controls, I think about, you know, when you have a  
13 TV account, there was a children's account, and she  
14 could only use the children's account.

15 Like I said, my wife had the controls  
16 of being able to access -- like, the texts appear  
17 in both places, those sorts of things. So those,  
18 to me, were parental controls.

19 Specific to the platforms, I know we  
20 restricted her ability to get accounts for some  
21 time. I know some of the accounts started in high  
22 school. But I don't know the degree that we went  
23 in and required specific controls used within  
24 those.

25 I mean, at first, we did limit even

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 186

1 what she was able to add to her phone. So, to a  
2 degree, that's a control in its own right.

3 Q. Okay. So do you recall imposing any  
4 content restrictions on her cell phone when she was  
5 in middle school?

6 A. Again, the only place I recall -- I  
7 don't recall having specific conversations about  
8 that. I remember doing it with her access to TV,  
9 like Netflix and those sorts of things. But that's  
10 not part of this conversation.

11 So, specific to the social media, I --  
12 I don't know the answer to that.

13 BY MR. KEYES:

14 Q. Let me show you what has been marked as  
15 Exhibit Bulson 11.

16 MR. KEYES: I've been handed a note  
17 it's 4 p.m. You said you had a hard stop --

18 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I -- I --

19 MR. KEYES: -- at 4 p.m., and so how  
20 hard a hard --

21 THE WITNESS: Pretty --

22 MR. KEYES: -- stop is this?

23 THE WITNESS: It depends on what we're  
24 looking at. It's a pretty hard stop I have.

25 MR. BYRD: How long do you think you

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 187

1 have?

2 THE WITNESS: I just --

3 MR. KEYES: With -- with the proviso  
4 that I'm terrible at time estimates -- and I've  
5 said that in --

6 MR. BYRD: Yeah.

7 MR. KEYES: -- every deposition -- my  
8 guess is an hour to an hour and a half.

9 THE WITNESS: Yeah, that's not  
10 possible.

11 MR. KEYES: Okay. I want to respect  
12 your time.

13 Can we go off the record?

14 MR. BYRD: Yeah.

15 MR. KEYES: Okay.

16 MR. BYRD: Well, I mean, are we --  
17 don't -- huh?

18 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: I've got to read us  
19 off.

20 We're now going off the record at  
21 3:59 p.m.

22 \* \* \*

23 (Whereupon, there was a recess in the  
24 proceedings from 3:59 p.m. to 4:05 p.m.)

25 \* \* \*

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 188

1 (Exhibit 11 was not marked at this  
2 time.)

3 MR. KEYES: We're back on the  
4 stenographic record. Dr. Bulson has a hard stop at  
5 4 p.m. We're respecting the hard stop. We've  
6 agreed to resume and finish the deposition on  
7 Thursday, May 15th, at 1:30 here at the same  
8 location. We'll finish in 90 minutes or less, and  
9 I'll do my best to make it shorter. Is that fair?

10 MR. BYRD: That's fair. Thank you.

11 MR. KEYES: Thank you.

12 (WHEREUPON, the deposition was  
13 concluded at 4:05 p.m.)

14 (Signature Reserved.)  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 189

DEPOSITION ERRATA SHEET

Case Caption: In Re: Social Media Adolescent  
Addition/Personal Injury Liability Litigation

DECLARATION UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY

I declare under penalty of perjury that  
I have read the entire transcript of my deposition  
taken in the captioned matter or the same has been  
read to me, and the same is true and accurate, save  
and except for changes and/or corrections, if any,  
as indicated by me on the DEPOSITION ERRATA SHEET  
hereof, with the understanding that I offer these  
changes as if still under oath.

Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SEAN W. BULSON, Ed.D.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 190

DEPOSITION ERRATA SHEET

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SEAN W. BULSON, Ed.D.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 191

DEPOSITION ERRATA SHEET

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

Page No. \_\_\_\_\_ Line No. \_\_\_\_\_ Change to: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for change: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SEAN W. BULSON, Ed.D.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 192

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Cindy A. Hayden, Registered Merit Reporter and Notary Public for the State of Maryland, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing deposition was taken before me on the date and at the time and location stated on Page 1 of this transcript; that the deponent was duly sworn to testify to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; that the testimony of the deponent and all objections made at the time of the examination were recorded stenographically by me and were thereafter transcribed; that the foregoing deposition as typed is a true, accurate and complete record of the testimony of the deponent and of all objections made at the time of the examination to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am neither related to nor counsel for any party to the cause pending or interested in the events thereof. Witness my hand, this 12th of May, 2025.



---

Cindy A. Hayden,  
Registered Merit Reporter  
Notary Public  
State of Maryland  
My Commission expires:  
April 26, 2029